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ABSTRACT

Requirements of Mississippi legislation designed to upgrade student achievement and school personnel competence, reward good teaching, increase accountability, and facilitate state level educational leadership are clarified in this implementation guide. For each section of the Reform Act the rationale is summarized, statutory citations provided, and stipulations outlined. Mandates for improving student achievement include a full day kindergarten program, a statewide system of assistant reading instructors for grades 1 to 3, a comprehensive state testing program, more stringent graduation requirements including functional literacy testing, and a revised compulsory attendance law. Aimed at promoting better preparation and growth of school personnel are performance-based certification, required inservice training, a professional development program, and science and math teacher training scholarships. A performance-based school accreditation system is among local school management requirements. Included in state school governance, leadership, and finance provisions are a statement of Mississippi educational policy and an increase in minimum teacher salaries. An implementation calendar provides a detailed chronology of steps to be taken for each requirement and identifies the parties responsible for each step. (MJL)

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An Opportunity For Excellence:

The Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982

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A Report of the
Task Force for Educational Excellence in Mississippi
Convened By
The Phil Hardin Foundation
July 1983

EA 016 268

> . . .Mississippi can ill afford to delay action in improving its public education system. Clearly this is one of the major steps it must take to compete effectively with other States in the region for economic growth. . . .In the last analysis, improvement in public education will depend on what local school boards, teachers and administrators are able and willing to do to ensure quality education is available to children. The State can only guide that process by setting standards, providing the required leadership and motivation and raising the needed financial resources. . . .True progress for Mississippi must come not only from today's action, but from sustained leadership for education throughout this decade.

State Research Associates,
A Report to the Governor on Education
October 1982

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Preface: Leadership for Excellence

The Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982 presents a remarkable opportunity to improve public education in Mississippi and therefore to benefit the people of our state. To make the most of that opportunity requires that the Act be properly implemented. Implementation in turn requires statewide leadership and consensus for action. Such leadership and consensus will result from an understanding of the Act.

To promote that understanding, the Phil Hardin Foundation of Meridian convened in May of 1983 a Task Force of Mississippi educators. The Foundation asked the Task Force and its consultants to analyze the Act and to develop a guide to its implementation. That guide was to report in clear, concise language the requirements of the Act as well as to show how those requirements logically fit together to form a comprehensive strategy for educational improvement in Mississippi.

The Task Force also was asked to identify the persons and groups that had major responsibilities for implementation of the Act, to describe those responsibilities and to present a calendar of the steps those persons or groups should take to implement each part of the Act.

This report is the result of our work. We hope members of the public as well as members of the educational community will find the report useful as we all work to carry out a program of educational reform that will benefit generations of Mississippians.

We urge all Mississippians to join us in working for implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1982.

The Members of the Task Force

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Mississippi State Department
of Education

Mr. Andy Mullins
Governor's Office

Chapter 1

Governor William F. Winter: In Pursuit of Excellence in Public Education

1.

GOVERNOR WILLIAM WINTER: IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The pursuit of excellence in public education has been for me a longstanding endeavor, and upon my election as Governor it became the paramount goal of my administration. It was obvious that Mississippi could never properly address and solve its other problems in such areas as economic development, health care, and other human needs until it had established a fully competitive public school system.

It was to this end that in 1980 by legislative authorization a special task force was set up to make specific recommendations for improvement in public education. The task force, under the chairmanship of Jack Reed of Tupelo, produced findings that formed the basis for the education program I subsequently recommended to the Legislature in a special session called in December 1982.

With emphasis on early childhood education, this program also focused on the need for action in teacher selection and certification, curriculum strengthening, effective attendance procedures, administrative management training, and salary enhancement. In fact, every area of the educational process was considered and recommendations for improvement made.

Prior to the 1982 special session an amendment to the Mississippi Constitution was approved by the Mississippi Legislature. This amendment, which was later ratified in a popular referendum, created a lay state board of education with the authority to appoint the state superintendent of education. This governmental structure was intended to provide the means for strong state leadership in public education.

The work of the special task force, the constitutional amendment, and the 1982 special session set in place the most sweeping reform of our school system in the history of our state.

The commitment of the people of Mississippi to this program has been underlined by the investment of a very substantial additional amount of their taxes. It is our responsibility to ensure that we get our money's worth. That can be done only as there is firmly established a permanent commitment that our schools will provide our children with an education equal to the needs and challenges of the world in which they will live and work. This program is designed to accomplish that result. It remains for all of us to continue to support it.

William F. Winter, Governor

Chapter 2

What the Mississippi Education Reform Act Is Designed to Achieve

2. WHAT THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION REFORM ACT IS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE

The Education Reform Act of 1982 expresses the public intent to improve the quality of public education in Mississippi. The Act therefore provides means to do the following:

- Increase student achievement.
- Increase the competence of teachers and administrators.
- Reward demonstrated competence.
- Increase accountability for everyone involved in public education.
- Improve the capacity for state-level educational leadership.

Although education at all levels is important, the Education Reform Act places its greatest emphasis upon providing a sound foundation for learning. The importance of early childhood education as the foundation for later success in school is firmly established. Research shows that children who attend preschool programs score significantly higher on achievement tests than children who did not attend those classes. Stronger preparation in the early grades should reduce the need for later remediation, improve the promotion rate, and ultimately reduce the number of dropouts. Such preparation encourages the academically talented.

For these reasons the Education Reform Act establishes early childhood education programs intended to ensure that children acquire fundamental skills essential to learning in all academic areas. All Mississippi school districts are to implement a nine-month, full-school-day kindergarten program. In addition, the use of assistant instructors will be phased into the first three grades of all Mississippi elementary schools. These assistants will help teachers provide instruction in the basic skills. The experience of other states, such as North Carolina, indicates that the teaching assistant program holds great promise for improving early mastery of fundamental skills.

In order to find other ways to improve student achievement, it is necessary to know how well students are achieving and to identify reasons students fail in school. The Act therefore requires a study of the extent to which students are now mastering subject matter and whether school curricula are properly sequenced. Standardized testing also is required at more frequent intervals.

While early childhood education programs can provide a basis for later success in school, children must first be enrolled in those programs. In addition, children must also remain in school long enough and attend school on a regular enough basis that they can acquire those skills needed to enter the world of work, further their education, and be informed, responsible citizens. The Education Reform Act therefore provides a strong compulsory attendance law. In addition, the State will provide leadership and assistance to local school districts for the development of programs to encourage students to attend school and further their education.

To improve student achievement requires competent teachers and administrators who can be instructional leaders. The Education Reform Act therefore seeks to strengthen the preparation of teachers and administrators and to encourage their professional growth. The Act requires that the certification of beginning administrators and teachers be based upon an evaluation of performance in their first year. (During this year beginning teachers and administrators will hold a one-year **provisional** certificate). The intent is to provide for greater innovation in the formal preparation of beginning administrators and teachers, and to place much more emphasis upon demonstrated ability than upon coursework completed or academic degrees held. A new Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development is created to develop and administer the new certification standards and process.

The Act states it is Mississippi's educational policy that, to the extent possible, teachers shall receive salaries that are at least equal to the average of the salaries received by teachers in the southeastern United States. The Act also seeks to reward those who continue to upgrade their competencies throughout their career. The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development is required to plan for implementing a program to provide financial incentives that encourage and reward continued professional growth after initial certification. School Districts, with State assistance, are to improve their in-service training as well as their personnel appraisal and compensation systems. The Act also creates a scholarship program to attract more teachers to the fields of science and mathematics where a shortage of qualified teachers now exists.

As indicated above, one strategy for improving instructional quality and thus student achievement is to improve the preparation and continuing education of teachers. Another strategy is to improve the instructional management of local school districts. This can be done by improving the preparation and continuing education of administrators. In addition to encouraging and requiring such efforts, the Education Reform Act also attempts to improve local instructional management by requiring the establishment of a performance-based school accreditation system. Recent educational research has identified those actions of teachers and administrators that effectively contribute to learning. In short, the research has identified the teacher and administrator performance that causes students to learn more effectively. A Performance-Based School assessment Task Force is established by the Act to develop a school accreditation system. This system will assess the extent to which the teacher and administrator performance shown by research to improve student achievement is present in Mississippi schools.

The Task Force is additionally required by the Education Reform Act to recommend to the State Board of Education a curriculum and courses of study for public schools in Mississippi.

The Act also enhances the responsibility of the existing Commission on School Accreditation by providing staff that can monitor school performance between formal accreditation reviews to ensure that schools continue to fulfill accreditation standards. Further, the Commission will recruit, select, train, and assign the evaluators who will conduct the formal accreditation reviews in the schools.

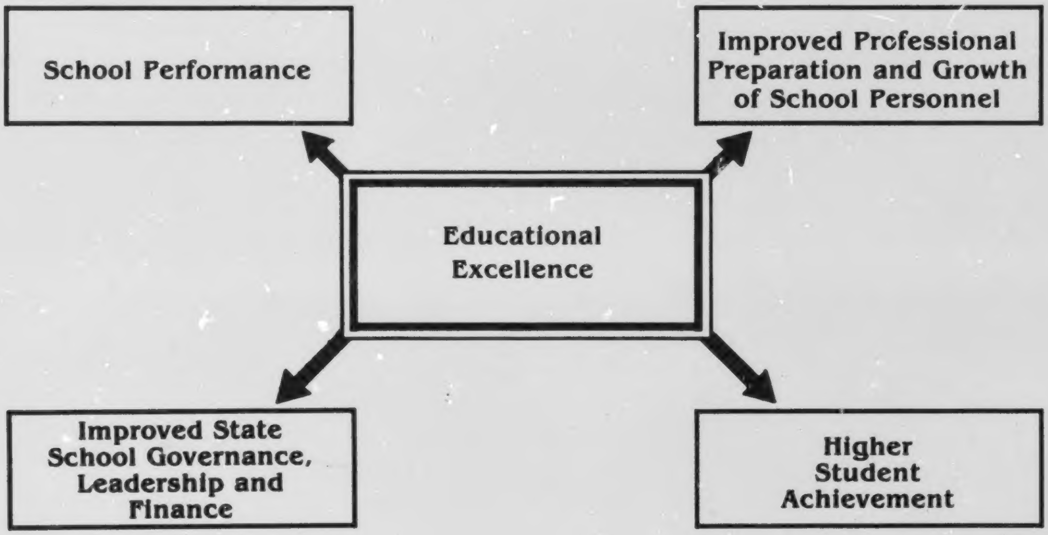
The intent of these changes in the school accreditation standards and procedure is to give school accreditation greater meaning, credibility, prestige, and respect.

The Act further seeks to improve local district instructional management by requiring a statewide study of the extent to which teachers are teaching out of the fields in which they are certified to teach. The Act also requires the State

Department of Education to provide training and assistance to local school districts to ensure that those districts have the management capability and financial resources to implement locally the state program of accountability and assessment. A School Executive Management Institute is established to develop and implement training programs designed to improve the performance of school administrators.

In the last analysis, improvements in public education will depend on what local school boards, teachers, and administrators are able and willing to do to ensure that quality education is available to all children. The State of Mississippi, however, can guide that process by setting standards, providing the required leadership, motivation, and technical assistance, and by raising the needed financial resources. The Education Reform Act seeks to create the conditions that permit the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, and the State Department of Education to perform these functions effectively. Consequently, the Act provides a clear statement of educational policy for the State of Mississippi. The duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education are revised. The State Department of Education is reorganized. In making these changes, the Act intends that the State Board, the State Superintendent, and The State Department should give especial emphasis to a state program of educational accountability, to long-range planning based on needs of local school districts and state educational priorities, and to technical assistance to local districts.

WHAT THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION REFORM ACT IS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE


School Performance
Improved Professional Preparation and Growth of School Personnel
Educational Excellence
Improved State School Governance, Leadership and Finance
Higher Student Achievement

Chapter 3

Understanding the Mississippi Education Reform Act

3. UNDERSTANDING THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION REFORM ACT

The Education Reform Act of 1982 is a comprehensive strategy for the improvement of public education in Mississippi. Implementation of the Act requires informed leadership, action, and support from educators and the public. For educators and laymen to provide that leadership, to perform the necessary actions, and to maintain support for implementation, these persons must have a clear understanding of the Act. This chapter is intended to provide that understanding.

The Education Reform Act can be organized logically into four sections. These are the following:

A. Student Achievement

B. Preparation and Professional Growth of School Teachers, Administrators, and Other Professionals

C. Local School Management

D. State School Governance, Leadership, and Finance

The Task Force has attempted to show how the parts of each section fit together and work together to bring about educational improvement. The Task Force has also analyzed each of the parts and has tried to state in clear, concise language what is required by the Act. We have attempted to present this analysis in a format that readily tells what is to be done, by whom, and when.

Some few provisions of the Act are vague and contradictory. We have identified those vague or contradictory points we believe are of importance.

Some readers of this report may wish to refer to the original words of the Education Reform Act (House Bill 4). Consequently, prior to each analysis, we have cited the section or sections of the Act that are being analyzed. In the near future, however, the Education Reform Act will be printed as part of the Mississippi Code of 1972. In the process of incorporating the Act into the Mississippi Code, the Act will not be printed as one single, complete part of the Code. Instead sections of the Act will be spread throughout the Code. Consequently, we have also provided citations for the relevant sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972.

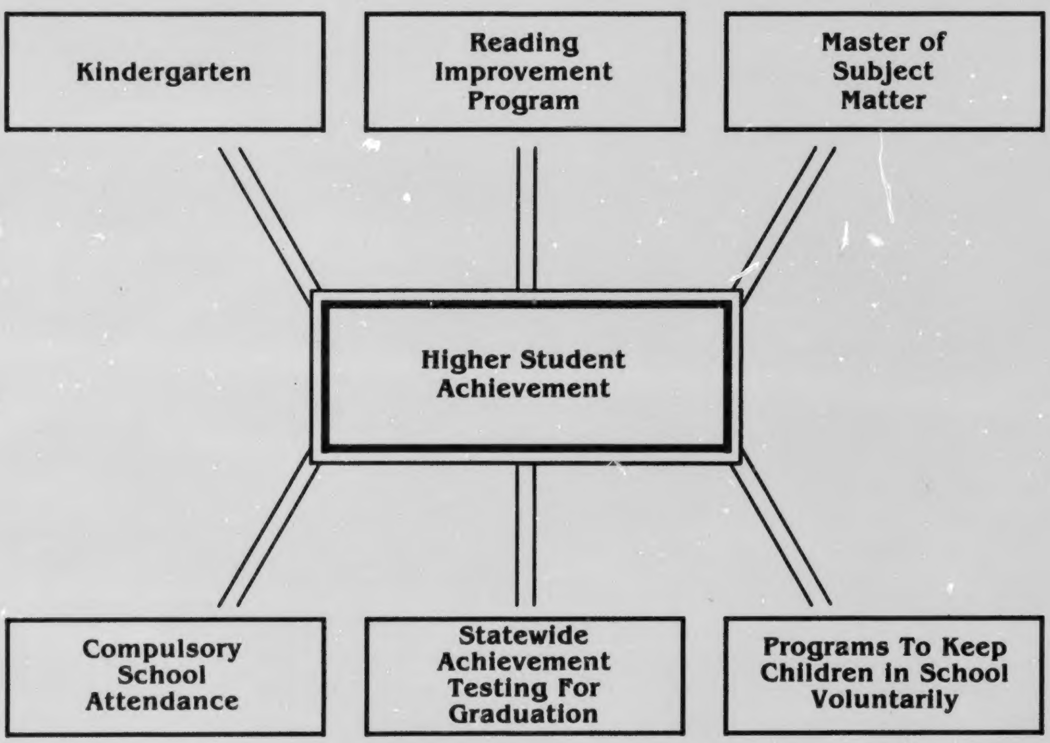
3.1. Student Achievement

The Education Reform Act states that the educational policy of the State of Mississippi includes the following:

- Public schools must produce a functionally literate population.
- Public schools must establish, raise, and maintain educational standards.
- Public schools must ensure that all students master the essential parts of a basic education.
- Public schools must emphasize early mastery of the skills necessary for success in school.

The State's educational policy also maintains that performance-based early childhood education programs are an essential element of a comprehensive

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT


Kindergarten
Reading Improvement Program
Master of Subject Matter
Higher Student Achievement
Compulsory School Attendance
Statewide Achievement Testing For Graduation
Programs To Keep Children in School Voluntarily

educational system. In addition, children in that comprehensive educational system should receive a period of instruction sufficient to train each in the basic education skills, while all children should be encouraged to continue their education until they have completed high school.

In keeping with these policies, the Act establishes the Early Childhood Education Program, the Mississippi Reading Improvement Program, and revises the statewide testing program for students. Additional graduation requirements are established. School attendance is required and assistance must be provided local school districts for dropout prevention programs.

3.1.1. A Mississippi Early Childhood Education Program Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-21-7
House Bill 4, Section 26 (1) and Section 27

Early childhood education is the foundation for later success in school. Such programs can ensure that children acquire the fundamental skills essential to learning in all academic areas. The Education Reform Act therefore requires all Mississippi school districts to adopt a nine-month, full-school-day kindergarten program that operates during the school year.

Beginning Dates: Each local school district may implement such a program during school year 1985-86 and may apply for available state funds to do so. During the 1986-87 school year and thereafter each local school district **must** implement a nine-month kindergarten program. To receive state funds, a district's program must be approved in advance by the State Department of Education.

The Early Childhood Education Grant-In-Aid Program: The Early Childhood Education Grant-In-Aid Program is established within the State Department of Education as of July 1, 1983. The Grant-In-Aid Program will be the means by which state funds are distributed to local school districts for kindergarten programs.

Criteria for Receiving Grant-In-Aid Funds: By April 1, 1984, the State Board of Education shall establish criteria local kindergarten programs must meet in order to be eligible to receive funds from the Grant-In-Aid Program. These criteria shall include but not be limited to the following: size of classes, hours of instruction, areas of curriculum, physical facilities, educational materials, parent participation, and qualifications of all personnel other than certified teachers.

Applying for Grant-In-Aid Funds: To apply for Grant-In-Aid funds, each school district must use forms provided by the State Department of Education on which the criteria for determining the eligibility of kindergarten programs is printed.

Each local school district **may** apply for Grant-In-Aid funds to support a kindergarten program during school year 1985-86 though state funds for that purpose will be limited to no more than five million dollars. In order to be eligible for a share of those funds, a school district must apply to the State Department of Education by May 31, 1985.

Each local school district **must** apply for Grant-In-Aid funds for school year

1986-87 and each school year thereafter to July 1, 1990. Applications must be submitted to the State Department of Education by May 31, 1986, and May 30 of each succeeding year.

Funding Levels: For school year 1985-86 the Legislature shall not appropriate more than five million dollars to the Early Childhood Grant-In-Aid Program. Beginning with fiscal year 1986-87, the Legislature shall not appropriate more than forty million dollars in any fiscal year for the Grant-In-Aid Program. The Grant-In-Aid Program does **not** include the Mississippi Reading Improvement Program. The Grant-In-Aid Program and the Reading Improvement Program are two distinct programs to be funded separately.

Allocation and Notification of Available Funds: The State Board of Education shall allocate and distribute appropriated Grant-In-Aid funds to school districts that apply and qualify. This allocation shall be based on a formula designed by the State Department of Education. The Act, however, then specifies that the State Board of Education shall allocate to each approved school district **an equal dollar amount per child** from the funds appropriated by the Legislature.

In addition, the Act requires that the State Board of Education notify local school districts by May 15 of each calendar year of the amount available per child from the funds appropriated by the Legislature for the early childhood Grant-In-Aid Programs. Local school districts shall be notified by July 1, 1986, as to whether their kindergarten applications have been approved for the 1986-87 school year and "the extent to which each district will be funded out of available funds." On each July 1 thereafter each district shall be notified whether its application has been approved and the amount of the funds allocated to it. (There is some apparent confusion in the Act concerning the date by which local school districts will be notified of the amount of funds per child available for kindergarten programs.)

Encouraging Other Financial Assistance: Any local school district may accept other financial assistance of any type from the State of Mississippi or any other government entity, or any contribution, donation, gift, decree, or bequest from any source which may be used for the implementation or maintenance of its early childhood education. Such funds, including local district funds, will be of especial importance if state funds do not pay the full cost of the program.

Early Childhood Education Programs and School Accreditation: Prior to the 1986-87 school year, the Commission on School Accreditation shall have developed minimum performance standards for local district early childhood education programs. By the 1986-87 school year, the early childhood education programs adopted by local school districts must comply with these standards.

An Analysis and Report to the Legislature: The State Board of Education through the State Department of Education shall make an analysis of early childhood education programs available to the Legislature on an annual basis. The first such analysis shall be submitted December 1, 1986, and each succeeding December 1, through 1990.

Termination: The legislation authorizing the Mississippi Early Childhood Grant-In-Aid Program and requiring kindergarten programs in all local school districts is repealed as of July 1, 1990.

Additional Information and Assistance: Additional information and assistance is available from the Division of Instruction, Mississippi State Department of Education, P. O. Box 771, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.

3.1.2. The Mississippi Reading Improvement Program Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-21-7
House Bill 4, Section 26 (2)

Early mastery of basic skills is vital to the later success of children in school. The more school time that students spend engaged in the study and practice of basic skills, the better and faster students learn. Adding an assistant teacher to a classroom means there are then two adults in the classroom to work with students. Working under the direction of the certified teacher, the assistant is able to work with small groups or individual students. The certified teacher meanwhile works with other groups or individual students. This arrangement significantly increases the amount of school time students are engaged in the study and practice of basic skills. Mastery of basic skills therefore can improve significantly.

Definition and Purpose: The Mississippi Reading Improvement Program consists of a statewide system of assistant reading instructors in each first, second, and third grade class of the public schools. The purpose of the program is to provide an early childhood education program that assists in the instruction of all basic skills, including reading.

Implementation of the Program: The State Board of Education is directed to implement the Program on a statewide basis over a three year period. Beginning with the 1983-84 school year, there shall be one assistant reading instructor assigned to each public school first-grade classroom in the State of Mississippi. In school year 1984-85, there shall be one assistant reading instructor assigned to each first and second grade class while in school year 1985-86, there shall be one assistant reading instructor in each first, second, and third grade class.

The Role of the Local School District in Implementation: To receive funds for support of the Program, each local school district shall do the following in regard to implementation:

(1) Submit a plan to the State Department of Education for the implementation of the Reading Improvement Program in the district.
(2) Develop a plan of educational accountability and assessment of student performance in reading in grades one through six.

In addition, each school district shall also do the following:

(1) Implement an annual orientation session for teachers and assistant instructors that emphasizes program goals.
(2) Hold periodic workshops for teachers on the effective use of assistant reading instructors.
(3) Provide training annually on specific instructional skills for assistant reading instructors.

(4) Evaluate annually the district's reading improvement program. This should be done as part of the district's educational accountability and assessment of performance plan in reading for grades one through six.

(5) Designate the necessary personnel to supervise and report on the district's program.

Finally, each school district shall ensure that each assistant reading instructor shall assist pupils in instruction under the strict supervision of a certified teacher.

The Role of the State Department of Education in Implementation: The State Department of Education shall do the following in regard to implementation:

(1) Develop and assist in the implementation of a statewide uniform training program for teachers and assistant reading instructors.

(2) Evaluate annually the reading Improvement Program through the use of an acceptable standardized testing system.

(3) Promulgate rules, regulations, and other such standards necessary to implement the Reading Improvement Program and accomplish its purpose.

Criteria for Teaching Assistants: Assistant reading instructors shall have at least a high school diploma and shall demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing skills.

Funding for the Reading Improvement Program: In Mississippi, one of the ways in which funds are allocated to school districts is under the terms of what is called the Minimum Foundation Program. (This Program is described in more detail in Part 3.4.7. of this chapter.) The Minimum Foundation Program allots each school district a legislatively-determined amount of dollars for each Minimum Foundation Program teacher unit. In the first, second, and third grades, each school district is allocated one teacher unit for each twenty-four pupils in average daily attendance during designated parts of the school year.

Funding for the Mississippi Reading Improvement Program shall be provided as follows: Beginning with the 1983-84 school year, the State of Mississippi shall allot each school district $5,500 per Minimum Foundation Program teacher unit in the first grade. These funds shall be used for the purpose of employing an assistant instructor. The funds shall be allotted in addition to other state funds allotted the local district under the state's Minimum Foundation Program. Beginning with the 1984-85 school year, each school district shall be allotted $5,500 per Minimum Foundation Program teacher unit in the first and second grades. For school year 1985-86, $5,500 shall be allotted for each such teacher unit in the first, second, and third grades.

Use of Funds: Funds allocated to school districts to implement the Reading Improvement Program shall be used only for that purpose. Funds improperly used must be returned to the State Department of Education.

Additional Information: Additional information about the Mississippi Reading Improvement Program is available from the Division of Instruction, Mississippi State Department of Education, P. O. Box 771, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.

3.1.3 A Program Of Statewide Testing Is Mandated

Mississippi Code, Sections 37-16-1, 37-16-3, 37-16-5, 37-16-7, 37-16-9

House Bill 4, Section 30 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (7)

In order to improve student achievement it is first necessary to know how well students are achieving. A statewide testing program permits the identification of especially effective instructional programs as well as areas of instructional weaknesses. This information in turn serves as a basis for local and state efforts to remedy the areas of weakness and thus to improve student achievement.

Mississippi in the past has had a statewide testing program but in grades different from those prescribed by the Education Reform Act.

The purposes of the statewide testing program established by the Education Reform Act are listed below.

Purposes: The statewide assessment testing program is to provide information needed at the state level for decisions intended to improve the operation and management of the public schools. The program shall be designed to accomplish these more specific purposes:

(a) Assist in the identification of educational needs at the state, district, and school levels.

(b) Assess how well districts and schools are meeting state goals and minimum performance standards.

(c) Provide information to aid in the development of policy issues and concerns.

(d) Provide a basis for comparisons among districts and between districts, the state, and the nation, where appropriate.

(e) Produce data which can be used to aid in the identification of exceptional educational programs and processes.

The Responsibility of the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education: The State Department of Education is directed to implement the statewide assessment testing program. As part of the program the Department shall do the following:

(a) Establish with the approval of the State Board of Education minimum performance standards related to goals for education contained in the State Board of Education's five year plan for educational improvement. These minimum performance standards shall be set for basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics as well as other unspecified subject areas. The minimum performance standards shall be approved by April 1 in each year they are established.

(b) Develop and administer in the public schools a uniform statewide program of assessment to determine periodically educational status and progress as well as the degree of achievement of approved minimum performance standards. The uniform statewide program shall consist of testing in grades 3,5,8, and 11. The State Department may include additional grades and skill areas in the testing program. The schedule for testing shall be determined by the department.

(c) Monitor the results of the testing program. At any time the composite student performance of a school or a basic program in the school is found to be below the state-established minimum standards, the State Department of Education shall notify the district superintendent, the school principal, and the school advisory committee or other existing parent group of the situation within thirty days of determination. The Department shall then provide technical assistance to the district to identify the causes of this deficiency. Courses of action to correct the deficiency shall be recommended.

(d) Provide when requested technical assistance to school districts in the development of student performance standards in addition to the established state minimum standards.

The State Board of Education also shall develop a functional literacy examination. The examination shall measure the ability of students to successfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations. Successful completion of the examination shall be a requirement for high school graduation at all Mississippi high schools. The examination shall be developed and administered in a manner prescribed after a public hearing and consideration by the State Board.

In addition, the State Board of Education shall, after a public hearing and consideration, provide for appropriate modification of testing instruments and procedures for students with identified handicaps or disabilities. These modifications will be made to ensure that the results of the testing represent student's achievement rather than reflecting impairments.

Public Hearings and Security of Test Content: The public hearing and consideration requirements cited above shall not amend or nullify the security requirements relating to the content of examinations, assessment instruments, and related material or data.

The Responsibilities of the Local School District: Each local district school board periodically shall assess student performance and achievement in each school. Such assessment programs shall be based upon local goals and objectives which are compatible with the state's five-year plan for educational improvement and which supplement the minimum performance standards approved by the State Board of Education. Data from district assessment programs shall be provided to the State Department of Education when such data are required to evaluate specific instructional programs or processes or when such data are needed for other research or evaluation projects.

The Existing Statewide Testing Program: In 1975 the Mississippi Legislature required that the State Department of Education establish a program of educational accountability and assessment of performance which, among other things, was to include assessing the performance of students. Subsequently, the State has required the testing of public school children, with the State Board of Education mandating that grades 4, 6, and 8 be tested.

3.1.4 High School Graduation Requirements Are To Be Revised

Mississippi Code, Sections 37-16-7, 37-16-9, 37-16-11
House Bill 4, Section 30 (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

High school graduation requirements are to be revised to ensure that students have mastered minimum performance standards and can successfully apply basic skills to life situations. The results of tests to measure student achievement in these areas can show which parts of a school district's instructional program needs strengthening.

Local District Responsibility for Graduation Requirements: Beginning with the 1984-85 school year each district school board shall revise the high school graduation requirements for that district. These revised requirements shall include as a minimum the following:

(a) Mastery of the minimum performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for the eleventh grade that are established by the State Board of Education as part of the statewide testing program.

(b) Demonstrated ability to successfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations. This ability shall be measured by a functional literacy examination developed and administered in a manner prescribed by the State Board of Education.

(c) Completion of a minimum number of academic credits and any other applicable requirements prescribed by the district school board.

State Board of Education Responsibilities for Graduation Requirements: In the manner prescribed after a public hearing and consideration, the State Board of Education shall determine what the minimum performance standards shall be in reading, writing, and mathematics in the eleventh grade. Similarly, the functional literacy examination shall be developed and administered in a manner prescribed after a public hearing and consideration by the State Board.

The Standard Diploma: A student who meets all the requirements cited above shall be awarded a standard diploma. The State Board of Education shall prescribe the form of the diploma.

Graduation Requirements for the Handicapped: A student who has been properly classified in accordance with State Board of Education rules and categories as handicapped shall not be required to meet all of the above graduation requirements. Special graduation requirements shall be prescribed by local school district boards. These local requirements, however, must include minimum graduation requirements for the handicapped prescribed by the State Board of Education. Handicapped students who meet all of the above local and state requirements shall receive a special diploma. If a handicapped student does not meet the special state requirements but does satisfy all other local special graduation requirements for the handicapped, the student shall be awarded a special certificate of completion. The form of the special diploma and special certificate shall be prescribed by the State Board of Education. Upon proper request any handicapped student shall be offered the opportunity to meet all requirements for the standard diploma through the standard procedures established for that purpose.

3.1.5. A Study of Subject Matter Mastery is Required

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-8 (b)
House Bill 4, Section 7 (b)

There is a high student failure rate in Mississippi public schools, especially in the higher grades. This failure rate indicates that something is seriously wrong in the instructional process. One possible cause of the failure rate is that students are being advanced from one grade level to another without first having mastered the previous material. Research on effective teaching shows that almost all children are able to master material if sufficient time and attention is given by them to learning and if effective instructional techniques are used. At any rate, the cause of the high failure rate must be determined. To do that, the Education Reform Act requires that a study of student mastery of subject matter be carried out.

The Required Study: The State Department of Education shall conduct a study of student mastery of subject matter. This study shall determine:

(1) The extent to which children in Mississippi public schools master one level of course work before being advanced to the next level.
(2) What may be done to assure that progression in subject matter from one level to another is properly sequenced.
(3) What steps are now being taken to assure that children are progressing satisfactorily toward mastery of the material under study.

Report on Findings: The State Department of Education shall report the findings of the study to the Board of Education by July 1, 1984. The Board shall then submit this report to the next regular session of the Legislature along with a statement of any corrective action taken and recommendations for any further corrective action that is needed.

3.1.6. The Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law is Revised and Strengthened

Mississippi Code, Section 37-13-91 as Amended
House Bill 4, Section 21

Mississippi Code, Section 43-21-355 as Amended
House Bill 4, Section 22

As stated previously, early childhood education programs provide a basis for later success in school by ensuring that children acquire very early the fundamental skills necessary to success. To learn those skills at an early age, children must be in school. There is, however, more that must be done than give children a good start. Children must also remain in school long enough and attend school on a regular enough basis to acquire those skills needed to enter the world of work, further their education, and be informed, responsible citizens.

In 1956 Mississippi became the only state to have ever repealed its compulsory school attendance law. The 1977 Mississippi Legislature reinstituted a compulsory attendance law, but since 1977 that law has been widely perceived as unenforceable.

The Education Reform Act therefore includes a section to be known as the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law. This Law provides means to enforce compulsory school attendance.

Compulsory Attendance Requirements: Beginning with the 1983-84 school year, every child who has attained the age of six years but is not yet eight years old on or before September 1, 1983, shall attend school. Each school year after 1983-84 and through 1989-1990 one year of age shall be added to the age of pupils required to attend school. During the school year 1989-90 and thereafter all children who are six years old but not yet fourteen years old by September 1 shall attend school.

Exclusions: A parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child in Mississippi shall cause that child to enroll in and attend a public school or legitimate nonpublic school for the period of time that the child is of compulsory school age, except under the following circumstances:

a) When a compulsory-school-age child is physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation.
b) When a compulsory-school-age child is enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education, or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children.
c) When a compulsory-school-age child is being educated in a legitimate home instruction program.

The Education Reform Act states that a "legitimate nonpublic school" and a "legitimate home instruction program" are those schools or programs "not operated or instituted for the purpose of avoiding or circumventing the compulsory attendance law."

A certificate of enrollment shall be completed for each child described in items (a), (b), and (c) above as well as for each child enrolled in a legitimate nonpublic school. This certificate shall be completed by the parent, guardian, or custodian of such a child. Alternatively, the certificates may be completed by the appropriate official of the nonpublic school the child attends.

Certificates of enrollment may be obtained from any school attendance officer in the state. The completed certificates must be returned on or before September 15 of each year to the school attendance officer for the youth court or family court where the child resides.

School Attendance Officers: The position of school attendance officer is established. Each youth court or family court judge shall appoint one or more school attendance officers. The duties of the school attendance officer are as follows:

(a) Cooperate with any public agency to locate and identify all compulsory-school-age children who are not attending school.
(b) Cooperate with any other courts of competent jurisdiction.
(c) Investigate all cases of nonattendance and unlawful absences by compulsory-school-age children not enrolled in a nonpublic school.
(d) Provide appropriate counseling to encourage all school-age children to attend school until they have completed high school.
(e) Attempt to secure the provision of social or welfare services which may be required to enable any such child to attend school.
(f) Visit the home or place of residence of a compulsory-school-age child and any other place in which the officer is likely to find any compulsory-school-age child when such child is absent from school during school hours without a valid written excuse from school officials. When such child is found, the officer shall return the child to his or her parents or to the principal or teacher or other official in charge of the school.
(g) Visit promptly the home of each compulsory-school-age child in the school district within the officer's jurisdiction who is not enrolled in school or is not in attendance at public school and is without a valid written excuse from school officials. If no valid reason is found for such nonenrollment or absence from school, the school attendance officer shall give written notice to the parent, guardian or custodian of the requirement for such child's enrollment or attendance.
(h) Perform all other duties relating to compulsory school attendance established by the youth court or family court.

State Funding for School Attendance Officers: The state shall provide funding for one school attendance officer employed by the youth court or family court judge for each one thousand five hundred (or major fraction thereof) of compulsory-school-age children in enrollment in the public schools within the jurisdiction of the youth court or family court. Each youth court and family court, however, shall be allotted at least one school attendance officer for the territory within the jurisdiction of the youth court or family court though in no case shall a county be allotted more than five school attendance officers. The State Board of Education shall not approve funding more than one school attendance officer until justification is provided by the youth court or family court.

On or before January 1, 1985, the State Board of Education shall review the results of the use of the above formula for allocation of school attendance officers, and if the State Board finds that there is an excessive number of such officers, it may implement a new formula at any time thereafter to reduce the number.

Limited Liability: Any school attendance officer making a report required by Section 43-21-353 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 or participating in the judicial proceedings resulting therefrom shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability.

The Enforcement Process for Compulsory Attendance: When the school attendance officer has made all attempts to secure enrollment and/or attendance the attendance officer shall file a petition with the youth court under Section 43-21-451 of the Mississippi Code. The youth court shall expedite a hearing to make an appropriate adjudication and a disposition to ensure compliance with the Compulsory School Attendance Law. Upon prosecution of a parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child for violation of this law, the presentation of evidence by the prosecutor that shows that the child has not been enrolled in school within thirty calendar days after the first day of the school year of the public school which the child is eligible to attend, or that the child has accumulated twenty unlawful absences during the school year at the public school in which the child has been enrolled, shall establish a prima facie case that the child's parents, guardian or custodian is responsible for the absences and has refused or wilfully failed to perform the duties imposed upon him or her under the provisions of this law.

No proceedings under this section, however, shall be brought against a parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child unless the school attendance officer has first visited the home of the child not enrolled or not in attendance to determine whether there is valid reason for nonenrollment or absence. If no valid reason exists, the officer shall give written notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the compulsory attendance requirement.

Youth and Family Court Responsibilities: The youth and family court has the responsibility for enforcing compulsory school attendance. The youth and family court judge therefore:

(a) Appoints the school attendance officer.
(b) Hears and adjudicates cases of noncompliance with the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law.
(c) Certifies the need for more than one school attendance officer for a county.
(d) Provides administrative support and supervision necessary to implement the Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Local Public School District Responsibilities: If a compulsory-school-age child has not enrolled within fifteen calendar days after the first day of the school year in a public school which that child is eligible to attend, the public school superintendent or school principal shall report the nonenrollment to the local school attendance officer. For public schools only, if a compulsory-school-age child has accumulated ten unlawful absences during the school year, the district superintendent shall report those absences to the local attendance officer.

Each local public school district should establish procedures for determining which student absences are excused, (as provided for in Section 37-13-91 of the Mississippi Code of 1972) and which absences are unlawful.

State Board of Education Responsibilities: The State Board of Education shall establish a procedure for determining the number of school attendance officers to be allotted to each youth court or family court. The State Board shall not approve funding for more than one school attendance officer per court until justification for the additional positions is certified by the youth or family court.

On or before January 1, 1985, the State Board shall review the results of the use of the formula for allocation of school attendance officers. If the State Board finds there is an excessive number of such officers, it may implement a new formula any time thereafter to reduce the number of school attendance officers.

The State Board of Education also shall prepare the blank certificate of enrollment that must be completed for each compulsory-school-age child who is legally excluded from attending a public school or legitimate nonpublic school. (These legal exclusions are stated above.) The State Board shall then distribute a sufficient number of these certificates to each school attendance officer in the state.

Nonpublic Schools: The Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law "shall never be construed so as to grant, by implication or otherwise, any right or authority to any state agency or other entity to control, manage, supervise, provide for or affect the operation, management, program, curriculum, admissions policy or discipline of any (private or parochial school institution for the education or training of children) or home instruction program."

Additional Information and Assistance Concerning the Implementation of the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law: Responsibility for providing information and assistance concerning implementation of the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law has been assigned to the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth, 802 North State Street, Suite 101, Jackson, Mississippi 39201.

3.1.7. Programs To Keep Children In School Voluntarily Are Encouraged

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-46
House Bill 4, Section 8 (c)

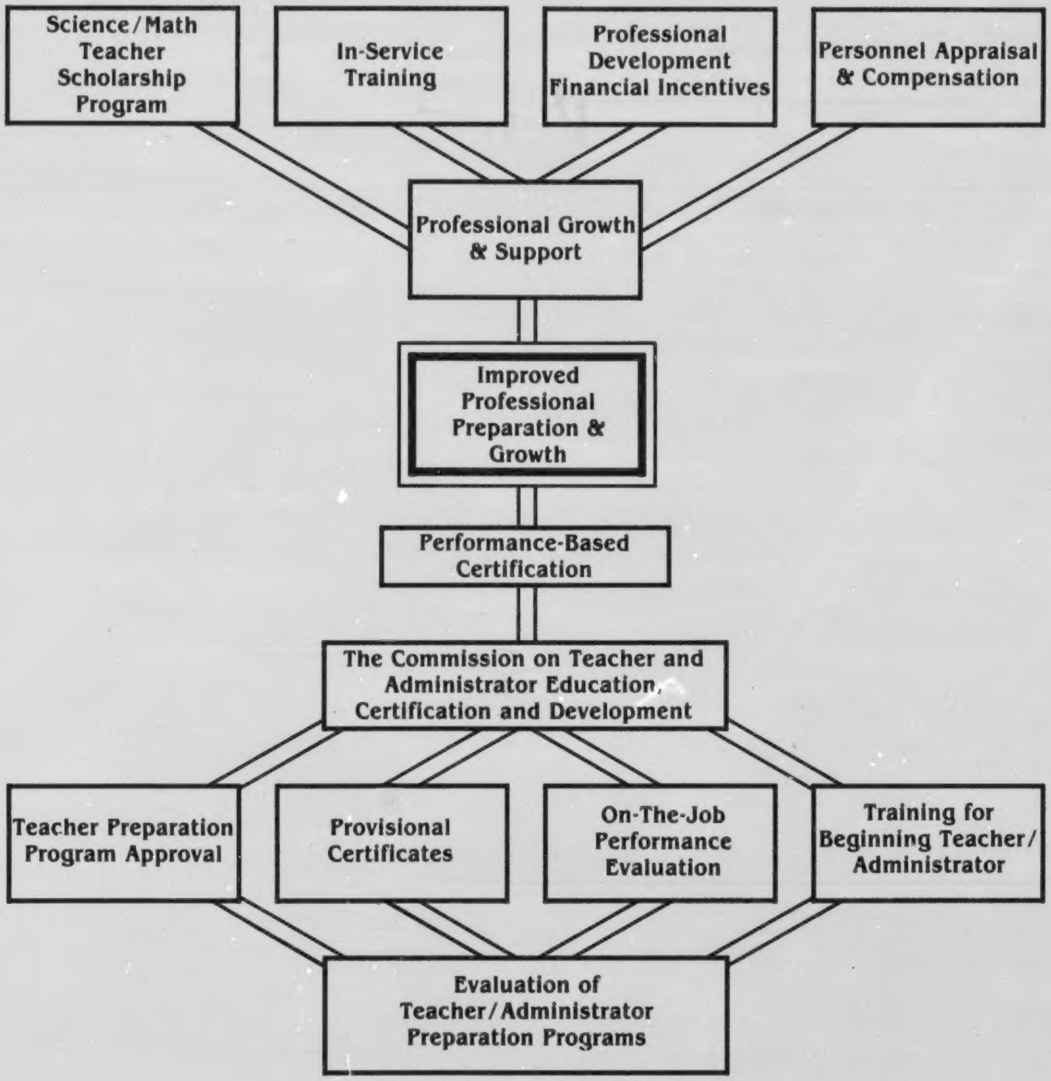
Strengthening the compulsory attendance law will provide a legal basis for requiring children to attend school. Experience in other states, however, confirms the need for innovative community and school programs designed to make school attendance a positive rather than a negative experience. Youth decide to drop out of school for a variety of reasons, but the most frequent is a dislike for school. The State of Mississippi intends to assert leadership to stimulate effective programs at the local level to deal with this problem.

Assistance to Local Districts: From and after July 1, 1983, the State Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to local school districts for the development, implementation, and administration of programs designed to keep children in school voluntarily and to prevent dropouts.

3.2. Preparation And Professional Growth Of School Teachers, Administrators, and Other Professionals

To improve student achievement requires competent teachers and administrators who are instructional leaders. The Education Reform Act therefore seeks to strengthen the preparation of teachers and administrators and to encourage their professional growth. Substantial changes are to be made in the criteria and process for certifying teachers and administrators to help ensure competence in the educational profession. The Act presents an opportunity not only to relax

PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH


Science/Math Teacher Scholarship Program
In-Service Training
Professional Development Financial Incentives
Personnel Appraisal & Compensation
Professional Growth & Support
Improved Professional Preparation & Growth
Performance-Based Certification
The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Development
Teacher Preparation Program Approval
Provisional Certificates
On-The-Job Performance Evaluation
Training for Beginning Teacher/Administrator
Evaluation of Teacher/Administrator Preparation Programs

substantially the formal course requirements which presently constitute the major basis on which prospective teachers are certified but also to develop performance-based certification.

The Education Reform Act also requires that each school district develop a state-approved comprehensive in-service staff development plan. That plan must address needs for improvement that are determined by an evaluation of the on-the-job performance of the district's personnel. The in-service plan must be approved by the State Board of Education.

The Act additionally requires the State to plan and implement a program to encourage and financially reward teachers, school administrators, and other certified personnel for approved individual professional development activities.

The Act, in addition, provides for the development of personnel appraisal systems that, among other things, may reward demonstrated competence and exemplary performance. Finally, the shortage of math and science teachers in Mississippi is addressed by the establishment of a scholarship program to encourage prospective teachers and current teachers to prepare themselves to be licensed to teach math and science.

3.2.1. A Commission On Teacher And Administrator Education, Certification, And Development Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2
House Bill 4, Section 10

The Education Reform Act establishes the means and the opportunity for a comprehensive reform of the process and standards by which teachers and administrators are prepared, certified, and recertified in Mississippi. The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development will be a broad-based body that can look not only at current practices and needs but anticipate and respond to future demands. In addition, the Commission can be a policy formulating body which has continuity over time and which represents a broad spectrum of individuals interested in and vitally concerned with the issues of preparation, certification, and professional development of educators. The Commission offers an opportunity to study, revise significantly, and strengthen educator preparation, certification, and development. It presents an opportunity to develop performance-based certification and to relax substantially the formal course requirements which now constitute the major basis on which prospective teachers are certified. It is therefore an opportunity to encourage innovation in teacher and administrator preparation and to ensure that recertification requirements in fact contribute meaningfully to professional competence.

Purpose of the Commission: The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Development is to make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding the preparation, certification, and continuing professional development of teachers and administrators, and other persons in Mississippi public schools who perform educational tasks.

Duties of the Commission: The specific duties of the Commission, which are to be performed subject to the approval of the State Board of Education, are as follows:

a) Set standards and criteria for all public teacher education programs in Mississippi.
b) Annually approve or disapprove each of those public teacher education programs.
c) Establish standards in all fields for granting initial teacher certification.
d) Establish standards in all fields for renewal of teacher certificates.
e) Review and evaluate objective measures of teacher performance and make recommendations for their use.
f) Review all existing requirements for certification.
g) Consult with groups whose work may be affected by the Commission's decisions.
h) Prepare reports on current practices and issues in teacher education and certification.
i) Hold hearings concerning standards for teachers' and administrators' education and certification.
j) Hire expert consultants to assist with the above duties.
k) Appoint ad hoc committees to advise on specific areas.
l) Perform other tasks as delegated by the State Board of Education.

The Commission is also required to do the following, which are described in more detail in later sections of this report:

a) Develop a new process and criteria for certifying beginning teachers and administrators.
b) Establish a procedure prior to July 1, 1984, whereby all certified teachers must successfully complete a prescribed, in-service training program as a prerequisite for renewal of teacher certificates in all areas.
c) Develop by August 1, 1984, a plan for a program to encourage and financially reward teachers, administrators, and other certified personnel for professional development.

Hearings and Appeals of Certification Controversies: A final duty of the Commission is to hear all controversies involving the granting, revocation, suspension or any change whatsoever in the certification of an educator. The Commission may establish a sub-committee to hold such hearings. The Commission's decision may be appealed within ten days to the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education shall appoint at least one hearing officer to hold hearings, compile evidence, and render decisions on appeals of the Commission. The hearing officer shall set a date for a hearing *de novo* within thirty days after receipt of the appeal. The hearing must be held within thirty days. The decision of the hearing officer shall be final.

Commission Membership, Method of Appointment, and Terms: The Commission shall have fifteen members. The Commission's initial fifteen members shall be appointed by the Governor prior to July 1, 1983. Three members shall be appointed from each congressional district. The membership shall be composed of the following:

(1) Four classroom teachers.
(2) Three school administrators.
(3) One representative of schools of education of institutions of higher learning within Mississippi to be recommended by the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning.
(4) One representative of public junior colleges to be recommended by the Junior College Commission.
(5) One local school board member. And,
(6) Five lay persons.

The Governor shall also appoint from its membership a chairman for the Commission. The term of all members (including the chairman) appointed by the Governor shall be from July 1, 1983, to September 1, 1984.

After September 1, 1984, all members of the Commission shall be appointed by the State Board of Education after consultation with the State Superintendent of Education. The State Board shall also appoint a chairman for the Commission. The first fifteen appointments by the State Board shall include five members appointed for a one-year term, five members appointed for a two-year term, and five members appointed for a three-year term. All subsequent appointments to the Commission made by the State Board shall be for four year terms.

Commission Staff: The State Superintendent shall assign a staff member of the State Department of Education as executive secretary and coordinator for the Commission. At least two additional State Department staff members shall also be assigned by the State Superintendent as Commission staff members.

Commission Meetings: The State Superintendent of Education shall call the first meeting of the Commission no later than July 20, 1983. The Commission shall meet at least every two months, and more often as needed, as authorized by the State Board of Education.

3.2.2. Changes Are Made In Beginning Teacher And Administrator Certification

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2 (9-13) (19-20)
House Bill 4, Section 10 (9-13) (19-20)

The process and standards for certification of beginning teachers and administrators are revised. The terms "beginning teacher" and "beginning administrator" refer not only to persons who for the first time are serving as teachers or administrators but also to experienced teachers or administrators who are applying for their first Mississippi certificates. All such beginning teachers and administrators must demonstrate by test performance mastery of relevant basic skills and knowledge required by their jobs. In addition, beginning teachers and administrators must demonstrate by on-the-job performance during a period of provisional certification an acceptable level of job proficiency.

Provisional Certificates: A teacher or administrator entering the school system of Mississippi for the first time shall be granted a one-year provisional certificate. This certificate may be renewed for not more than two additional one-year periods. A teacher or administrator having a provisional certificate shall be paid a minimum salary in accordance with the salary scale established by the Mississippi Legislature.

Managing the Provisional Year: As part of its duties concerning certification, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development is required to develop a management system for overseeing the provisional year of all teachers and administrators holding provisional certificates. That management system will include the procedure and criteria for renewing the provisional certificates as well as the procedure and criteria for granting regular certification after the provisional period.

The Commission is to develop a comprehensive plan showing how it will accomplish these tasks. This plan shall be presented to the State Board of Education by August 1, 1984. The State Board may authorize pilot projects to test this plan during the 1984-85 and 1985-86 school years. A final plan approved by the State Board shall be in effect by the 1986-87 school year.

Rules and Criteria for Certification: As previously noted, the Commission must establish as part of this final plan for managing the provisional year rules and criteria for granting regular certification following the provisional period. These rules shall require the beginning teacher to be evaluated in the following areas by the following means:

a) A basic skills examination to determine whether the provisional teacher has mastered reading, writing, and mathematics skills a prospective school teacher reasonably should be expected to achieve.
b) An examination that measures a minimum amount of common knowledge in the cognitive teaching area in which the prospective teacher seeks certification.
c) An observational instrument to be used to evaluate the on-the-job performance of the teacher during the provisional years.

Similarly, these rules shall require the beginning administrator to be evaluated in the following areas by the following means:

a) A basic skills examination to determine if the candidate has mastered personnel management, financial management, and other administrative practices a prospective administrator should be expected to achieve.
b) An examination to measure the candidate's mastery of common knowledge in the teaching areas of English, mathematics, and social studies.
c) An observational instrument to be used to evaluate the on-the-job performance of an administrator during the provisional year.

The Commission shall establish as criteria for granting regular certificates the scores that must be achieved by teacher and administrator candidates on the examinations to demonstrate mastery of basic skills and knowledge areas. The Commission also shall set the criteria for deciding what is a satisfactory level of on-the-job performance. The Commission may establish additional rules and criteria for granting certification following the provisional period.

Reports of On-The-Job Performance: The Commission's plan for managing the provisional period must also include the development of a procedure by which each school or school district will make reports to the Commission about the performance of each teacher and administrator holding provisional certification. These reports shall contain an evaluation of the on-the-job performance of the provisional teacher or administrator. (This evaluation might be based on the results of the use of the observational instrument the Commission shall require districts to use, as noted above.) The reports also must contain a recommendation concerning whether the teacher or administrator should be awarded regular certification.

Each report must be signed by the school administrator or supervisor who conducted a major part of the performance evaluation. The report must also be signed by the principal or superintendent and approved by the local school board.

In-Service Training for Beginning Teachers: Each school district is required to develop an in-service training plan for beginning teachers. This local in-service plan must be approved by the State Board of Education. The in-service plan must be in effect in the school district beginning with the 1986-87 school year. These local district in-service education plans must be based on the needs of the beginning teachers. These needs must be determined by on-the-job performance evaluations. (The observational instruments developed to assess the on-the-job performance of the provisional teachers may be used to make these evaluations. The State Board may delegate to the Commission the approval of these plans. The approval procedure for the in-service plans may be incorporated into the Commission's management plan for overseeing provisional teachers.)

Monitoring the Provisional Period: The State Board of Education shall establish an evaluation unit to monitor the provisional teacher and administrator program. This unit shall conduct studies to determine weaknesses in the preparation of provisional teachers and administrators. The unit will work under the direction of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development.

Other Sections of the Mississippi Code: Sections 37-9-9 and 37-9-11 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, which provide for rules and regulations governing the issuance of teachers' certificates and the establishment by the State Board of Education of minimum test scores that must be achieved by prospective teachers, remain in effect.

A Certificate as a Privilege License: The granting of a certificate to a teacher or administrator is not a property right nor a guarantee of employment. A certificate is a privilege license indicating the minimal eligibility for teaching in Mississippi public schools.

3.2.3. In-Service Training Is Required

Mississippi Code, Section 37-17-8
House Bill 4, Section 13

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2 (12) (14)
House Bill 4, Section 10 (12) (14)

Because teacher and administrator turnover rates in public schools currently are low, there is limited opportunity to improve local schools and school districts by the recruitment of new personnel. Consequently, the improvement of public education requires significant attention to the continuing education of teachers and administrators.

In-Service programs have as their primary aim the improvement of educational processes and administrative workings of the schools and school districts. As such, in-service training is primarily done for the benefit of the employing school district. Therefore, for the purposes of this Act, "in-service training" refers to a program of training or education designed by a school district for groups of teachers, administrators, and other staff. "Professional development," which will be dealt with in the next section, refers to a program or plan for training or education designed by an individual (subject to rules and criteria established by the State Department of Education) for the development of that individual.

A District In-Service Plan: Each school district must have a state-approved comprehensive in-service staff development plan in effect for the 1984-85 school year and annually thereafter. That plan must address needs for improvement that are determined by an evaluation of the on-the-job performance of the district's teachers, administrators, and other certified school personnel. The district plan shall be prepared by a district committee appointed by the superintendent and consisting of teachers, administrators, school board members, and lay people. The plan must be approved by the superintendent before submission to the Commission on School Accreditation which, acting for the State Board of Education, decides whether to approve the plan.

State Approval of the District Plan: As noted, the in-service plan for each school district must be submitted to the Commission on School Accreditation for approval. The Commission will establish the date by which the plans are to be submitted, the procedure for approval of the plans, and the criteria by which the plans will be judged.

State Funding of In-Service Training: The Commission on School Accreditation, as agent for the State Board of Education, shall establish a formula and guidelines for allocating state funds for in-service training to local school districts which have an approved plan. State Funds for in-service education may not be allocated to local school districts that lack approved plans. A portion of the state funds allocated to implement a local district's approved plan must be used to provide in-service training for beginning teachers and for no other purpose.

The State Board of Education shall make recommendations each year to the Legislature concerning the amount of funds which shall be appropriated for in-service training.

In-Service Training and Teacher Certification: After July 1, 1984, certified teachers shall successfully complete their district's in-service plan, which has been approved by the State Board of Education, as a condition for renewal of teacher certificates in all fields.

In-Service Training and Beginning Teachers: Each district shall also develop an in-service training program for beginning teachers. Each district shall have a plan for such a program approved by the State Board of Education and in effect by school year 1986-87. The State Board may delegate the approval of these plans to the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development. (To reduce paper work, the State Board of Education may decide that the beginning teacher in-service plan should be developed as part of each district's comprehensive in-service staff development plan. The comprehensive plan would then be submitted to the Commission on School Accreditation as required above, while a copy of that part of the plan dealing with beginning teacher in-service would be submitted to the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development.)

3.2.4. A Program For Professional Development Is Mandated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2 (15) (16) (17)
House Bill 4, Section 10 (15) (16) (17)

Professional development is training or education selected by an individual for the development of that individual's career.

A Plan for a Professional Development Program: The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development shall develop a plan for implementing a program to encourage and financially reward professional development by individual teachers, school administrators, and other certified school personnel. The plan shall be presented to the State Board of Education no later than August 1, 1984. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a) Criteria to guide participants in planning their individual professional development.
b) Standards for insuring the "balance, breadth, and rigorousness" of such individual plans. (The Act does not define "balance, breadth, and rigorousness." Other sources have defined these terms as follows: "Breadth" refers to the range of training or education included in the plan and thus to the range of relevant knowledge and skills the individual will acquire. Breadth may insure balance. A person's professional development should not be overly specialized. "Rigorousness" refers to the level of effort required of the individual to complete the plan or the various parts of the plan.)

c) Criteria for the evaluation and approval of individual professional development plans.
d) Procedures for administering the program.

Approval For the Plan: The State Board of Education may adopt rules and criteria for a "Professional Development Program" based on the plan presented by the Commission.

Responsibility For the Professional Development Program: Once the Professional Development Program is implemented by the State Board of Education, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development is responsible for the following:

a) Reviewing and approving all individual professional development plans.
b) Monitoring compliance with the approved plans.
c) Approving amendments and revisions to the individual plans.
d) Certifying activities that are acceptable for inclusion in a professional development plan.
e) Certifying completion of one-year segments of the plan.
f) Authorizing pay increments provided by law for completion of all or segments of the individual professional development plans.

3.2.5. A Personnel Appraisal And Compensation System Is To Be Developed

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-46 (b)
House Bill 4, Section 8 (b)

Each local school district is encouraged to develop and implement a personnel appraisal and compensation system for all employees.

Technical Assistance and Training: Beginning July 1, 1983, the State Department of Education shall provide to local school districts technical assistance and training in the development, implementation, and administration of a personnel appraisal and compensation system for all employees.

Recommendations to the Legislature: The State Board of Education shall report to the Legislature on January 5, 1986, with recommendations based on the personnel appraisal and compensation system developed under this subsection.

3.2.6. A Science And Math Teacher Scholarship Program Is Created

Mississippi Code Section 37-101-281
House Bill 4, Section 29

Purpose of the Program: The Science and Math Teacher Scholarship Program is intended to encourage current and prospective teachers in Mississippi to become certified to teach in academic areas in which there exist critical shortages of teachers. These areas are in grades seven to twelve and include mathematics, biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, mathematics-physical science, and natural sciences or geology.

Eligibility and Other Terms of the Program: There are two categories of persons who may apply for these forgivable loans:

> **Category One:** Persons who are not certified to teach; who are (or will be) enrolled on a full-time basis as sophomores, juniors, or seniors at a Mississippi public university approved by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning to offer teacher education programs; and who have been admitted to such a teacher education program leading to a major or area of concentration in one of the academic areas listed above.

Persons in this category are eligible only for loans for the academic year and not for summer school. A student receiving a loan during his sophomore year shall be eligible for a maximum of three academic year loans. A junior establishing initial eligibility shall receive a maximum of two academic year loans while a senior shall receive one loan.

> **Category Two:** Persons who currently are certified to teach in the State of Mississippi but who are not certified in one of the above academic areas and who wish to be certified in those areas.

Persons in this category are eligible only for loans for summer session course work. Up to three loans may be received, one for each of three summers of course work. Applicants must be able to complete the required courses for certification in math or science after completion of no more than three summers of course work.

Nature of the Scholarship: The scholarships shall be made in the form of loans that can be forgiven by conversion into interest free scholarships that do not require repayment.

Conditions for Conversion of Loans to Scholarships: The Education Reform Act specifies that the loans of persons who actually render service as certified math and science teachers in Mississippi in grades seven to twelve for a major portion of the school day for at least seventy school days during each of consecutive school semesters beginning immediately after completing the agreed upon courses of study shall be converted to interest-free scholarships. The Board of Trustees of State Institutions is authorized to specify additional conditions for conversion of the loans to scholarships. Among these are that the teacher must be employed and provide service in a school accredited by the Mississippi Commission on School Accreditation. Information about other conditions is available from the Office of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

Conversion of the scholarships to loans shall be based on two semesters of service for each academic year loan received. One semester of service is required for conversion of each loan made for summer school study.

Penalties: Persons failing to complete the agreed-upon program of study for certification shall become immediately liable to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning for the sum of all outstanding loans plus interest. Persons failing to meet teaching requirements in any required semester shall become immediately liable to the Board for repayment of an amount equal to one-half of an academic year loan or one summer session loan plus interest. In both cases some deferrals are possible under certain conditions specified by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

Failure to pay any loans and interest that become due shall be cause for revocation of a person's teaching certificate by the State Department of Education.

Funding of the Scholarship Program: If insufficient funds are available for requested loans to qualified persons during any fiscal year, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall make pro rata reductions in the loans made to qualifying applicants.

Termination of the Scholarship Program: The Section of the Mississippi Code of 1972 authorizing the math and science scholarship program shall stand repealed from and after July 1, 1988.

Administration of the Program: The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall establish regulations necessary for the proper administration of the program. Information about amount of individual scholarships, application procedures, eligibility, other conditions for conversion of loans to scholarships, and any other matters concerning the program is available as follows:

Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning
Student Financial Aid
Post Office Box 2336
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 982-6168

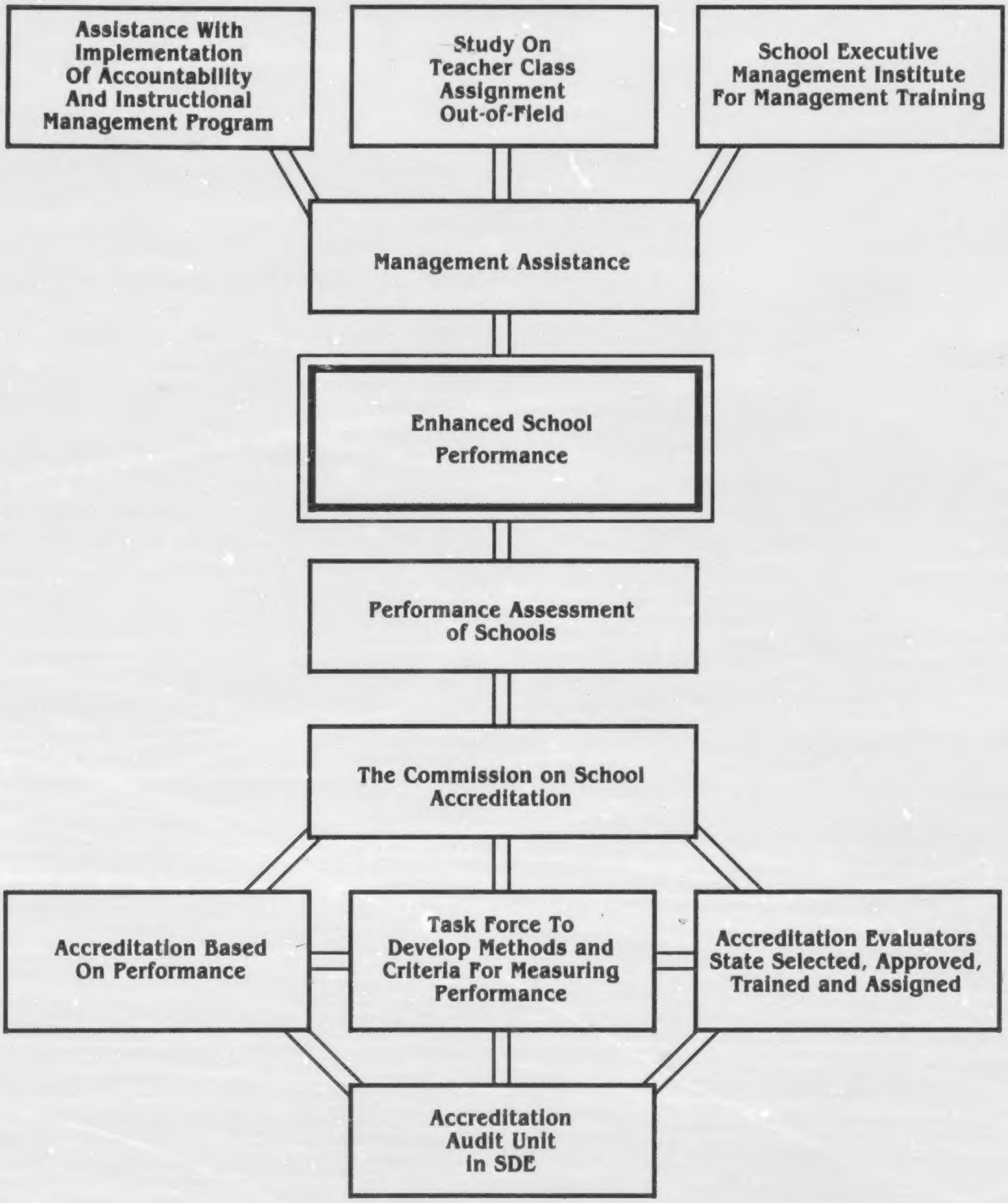
3.3. Local School Management

The Education Reform Act seeks to improve student achievement by improving the learning environment and especially by improving the quality of instruction students experience in that environment. One approach to improving instructional quality is to improve the preparation and continuing education of teachers. Section 3.2 of this chapter identifies the provisions of the Education Reform Act intended to bring about teacher improvement.

Another approach to improving instructional quality is to improve the instructional management of local school districts. In recent years research has identified characteristics of effective schools and effective classrooms. This research identifies those actions of teachers and administrators that contribute more effectively to learning than other actions. In short, the research has identified the teacher and administrator performance that causes students to learn more effectively. The Education Reform Act therefore mandates the establishment of a performance-based school accreditation system. This system will assess the extent to which those actions demonstrated by research to positively affect student behavior and improve academic achievement are present in the school. The system therefore has the capacity to improve local school management by setting performance standards local management must meet.

The Education Reform Act also revised the procedure for carrying out school accreditation reviews. This revision was made in order to remedy major weaknesses in previous procedure and to assure that schools are indeed impartially and

LOCAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT


Assistance With Implementation Of Accountability And Instructional Management Program
Study On Teacher Class Assignment Out-of-Field
School Executive Management Institute For Management Training
Management Assistance
Enhanced School Performance
Performance Assessment of Schools
The Commission on School Accreditation
Accreditation Based On Performance
Task Force To Develop Methods and Criteria For Measuring Performance
Accreditation Evaluators State Selected, Approved, Trained and Assigned
Accreditation Audit Unit in SDE

objectively evaluated for accreditation purposes. By thus protecting the integrity of the school accreditation process, the capacity of the performance-based accreditation system to improve local school management is maintained.

The intent of these changes in the school accreditation standards and procedure is to give school accreditation greater meaning, credibility, prestige, and respect.

The Act further seeks to improve local district instructional management by requiring a statewide study to be conducted of the extent to which teachers are teaching out of their fields of certification. This study will permit the State Board of Education to determine how widespread this ineffective school management practice is and will provide a basis for determining any needed action to correct the situation.

The Act continues and strenghtens the state's program of educational accountability and assessment of instructional performance, as noted in other sections of this report. The Act also requires the State Department of Education to provide training and assistance to local school districts to ensure that those districts have the management capability and financial resources to implement locally the state program of accountability and assessment.

Finally, a School Executive Management Institute is established to develop and implement training programs designed to improve the performance of school administrators.

3.3.1. A Performance-Based Accreditation System Is To Be Established For All Public Elementary And Secondary Schools

Mississippi Code, Section 37-17-6
House Bill 4, Section 12

In Mississippi the authority to establish school accreditation standards, to determine accreditation procedures, and to ensure compliance with the standards rests with the State Board of Education. The State Board performs these duties through a Commission on School Accreditation. In the past, the school accreditation standards set by the Commission have been the traditional type that measured "inputs" into the educational process: The preparation of teachers and administrators, the number of books in the library, etc. These standards, however, ignored all the recent research on school effectiveness and did not assess the performance of schools as instructional institutions.

The school effectiveness research identifies actions of teachers and administrators that contribute more effectively to bringing about student learning than other actions do. In short, the teacher and administrator performance that causes students to learn more effectively has been identified. The Education Reform Act therefore requires that a new set of standards be established for granting school accreditation. These standards shall be based on the teacher and administrator **performance** that causes students to learn more effectively. This **performance-based** school accreditation system will then measure the extent to which the performance of local school personnel includes the actions that produce improved student achievement. A Task Force will be appointed to develop a plan for such a system.

In the past the procedure for conducting on-site school accreditation reviews has had little credibility. Changes therefore are made in the procedure for conducting on-site reviews in order to ensure a consistently high level of rigor, impartiality, and objectivity: The Act requires that after December 1, 1984, the Commission on School Accreditation shall select, approve, train, and assign all persons who conduct on-site accreditation reviews.

The Act also changes the method of monitoring school accreditation: An accreditation audit unit is created that will conduct on-site audits on a random basis of schools' accreditation status.

The intent of these changes in the school accreditation standards and procedure is to give school accreditation greater meaning, credibility, prestige, and respect.

The details of the Act's requirements for performance-based school accreditation are stated below.

Requirement For A Performance-Based Accreditation System: The State Board of Education, acting through the existing Commission on School Accreditation, shall establish and fully implement a permanent performance-based school accreditation system no later than July 1, 1986. All public elementary and secondary schools shall be accredited under this system from that time forward. Nonpublic schools which receive no local, state, or federal funds shall not be required by the State Board of Education to become accredited.

The Performance-Based School Assessment Task Force: To assist the work of the Commission on School Accreditation in the implementation of a performance-based system of school accreditation, a Performance-Based School Assessment Task Force is established within the State Department of Education.

Duties of the Task Force: The Task Force shall undertake a study and on the basis of that study propose a plan to establish guidelines and criteria for a performance-based school accreditation system. This study and plan should take into account, but not necessarily be limited to, the following factors relating to performance-based school accreditation:

(a) The role and behavior of the school principal.
(b) The amount of time given to instruction (hours per day and days per year), especially in fundamentals.
(c) The availability and quality of preschool programs and the level of preparedness of children who have been in those programs.
(d) School-wide student discipline practices and policies.
(e) The emphasis placed on acquisition of basic skills.
(f) The commitment to bringing all children to a minimum level of achievement.
(g) The nature and quality of feedback given to students about their level of performance and the amount of reinforcement given to learning.
(h) Teacher preparedness as reflected in lesson plans, learning objectives, assessment criteria, and materials.
(i) Classroom decorum, discipline and management.

(j) The use of mastery learning techniques, direct instruction and active teaching in each classroom.

(k) The amount of time on task in all learning situations, and methods of assessing time on task as a measure of teacher effectiveness.

(l) The availability and use of diagnostic measurements in grade placement, assessment of a need for compensatory work or remediation, and academic achievement.

(m) The proper sequencing of subject matter from class to class and grade level to grade level. And,

(n) The coordination of curriculum throughout the system so that teachers know what has been taught in previous grades and what will be taught in subsequent grades.

It shall further be the duty of the Task Force to conduct a study and to make recommendations to the State Board of Education through the Commission on School Accreditation concerning curriculum and courses of study to be used in the public schools that are best designed to prepare Mississippi's children and youth to be productive, informed and creative citizens, workers, and leaders.

To carry out these studies and develop its plans, the Task Force is authorized to hold public hearings and to hire expert consultants.

The Task Force shall file its report with the Commission on School Accreditation on or before April 30, 1984.

Appointment, Membership, Terms, and Meetings of the Task Force: The Task Force shall be composed of seventeen qualified members to be appointed by the Governor prior to July 1, 1983. Of these seventeen members, three are to be appointed from each congressional district and two are to be appointed from the state at large. Of these appointments, two members must be classroom teachers, two school administrators, one representative of public junior colleges, one representative of institutions of higher learning, one representative of the Commission on School Accreditation, two local school board members, one representative of the State Superintendent of Education, and seven lay persons. The Task Force shall be disbanded on or before April 30, 1984, upon the filing of its report with the Commission on School Accreditation.

The first meeting of the Task Force shall be called by the Governor as soon after July 1, 1983, as practical. Thereafter, the Task Force shall meet when called by its chairman, but in no event shall meet less than one time per month.

Task Force Organization, Administration, and Staff: The Governor shall designate one member of the Task Force as its chairman. An appropriate staff member of the State Department of Education shall be designated and assigned by the State Superintendent of Education to serve as executive secretary to the Task Force. The State Superintendent shall also assign sufficient State Department staff members to serve as Task Force staff. Expert consultants may be hired to assist the Task Force.

The Task Force's Report and the Development of a Performance-Based Accreditation System by the Commission on School Accreditation: Once the Task Force has made its report to the Commission on School Accreditation, the State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, shall develop an interim performance-based accreditation system by July 1, 1984. This system shall be based on the report of the Task Force. To ensure that a workable system is developed, the State Department of Education acting through the Commission on School Accreditation shall undertake a two-year field testing and implementation period for the proposed performance-based accreditation system. On the basis of the field testing, necessary modifications will be made in the proposed system.

No later than July 1, 1986, the State Board of Education acting through the Commission on Accreditation shall have implemented a permanent performance-based accreditation system for use in accrediting schools in Mississippi.

New Classes of School Accreditation: In conjunction with the development of the performance-based accreditation system, the State Board of Education shall revise the current schedule of classes of school accreditation to better reflect the performance of schools. Such a revised schedule of classes of accreditation shall be in place by school year 1986-87 and shall be used with the performance-based accreditation system.

School Accreditation Audit Unit: As part of the transition to the performance-based accreditation system, the State Board of Education shall create not later than July 1, 1984, an accreditation audit unit under the Commission on School Accreditation. This audit unit shall be made up of full-time employees of the State Department of Education who are trained as accreditation auditors. The audit unit shall conduct field audits of schools on a random basis or when ordered by the Commission on School Accreditation. These field audits shall be for the purpose of determining whether schools are complying with accreditation standards. The audit unit shall report to the Commission on School Accreditation on the result of all audits.

Other Changes in the Process of School Accreditation: By December 1, 1984, and thereafter, the Commission on School Accreditation shall select, approve, train, and assign all persons who conduct on-site school accreditation reviews. These persons, who will be called evaluators, shall be trained to conduct competently and impartially the performance-based accreditation reviews.

Prior to this action the Commission shall establish guidelines and criteria for the selection and training of all evaluators and shall have obtained the approval of the State Board of Education for these guidelines and criteria.

Beginning in school year 1984-85, all on-site accreditation reviews done by the evaluation teams shall be submitted directly to the Commission on School Accreditation.

Assistance to Schools Failing to Meet Accreditation Standards: For those schools failing to meet accreditation standards, the State Board of Education shall establish a program of development to meet those standards. Failure to comply with that program of development shall result in the loss of state funds, except as provided in Section 206 of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890.

Notice To Schools Concerning Accreditation Standards: The State Board of Education shall provide notice to schools of the new accreditation standards. Sufficient time and aid shall also be provided by the Board to enable schools to attempt to meet these standards.

[redacted]

3.3.2. A Study Of Teaching Out Of Field Is Mandated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-8
House Bill 4, Section 7

A teaching certificate is intended to indicate that a teacher possesses at least the minimum knowledge and skills needed to teach in a given subject area. When teachers teach out of the subject area in which they are certified, students may not be receiving effective instruction.

A State Department Study With Subsequent Reports To The Legislature: The State Department of Education shall conduct and complete by July 1, 1984, a study of teachers who are teaching out of their field of certification. This study shall determine the extent to which teachers in local school districts are teaching out of their fields of certification; the conditions that cause such a practice; and, the most appropriate remedies to the problem. The result of this study shall be submitted to the State Board of Education on July 1, 1984. The Board shall submit this report to the next regular session of the Legislature along with recommendations for any further corrective action that might be required. The study shall be updated annually to determine the effectiveness of the corrective action taken.

3.3.3. Assistance To Local School Districts For Implementation Of A State Program Of Educational Accountability And Assessment Of Performance Is Required.

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-2 (m) (o)
House Bill 4, Section 2 (m) (o)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-3 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 5

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-46
House Bill 4, Section 8 (a)

Mississippi Code, Sections 37-16-1, 37-16-3, 37-16-5, 37-16-7, 37-16-9, 37-16-11
House Bill 4, Section 30

In the mid-1970s the Legislature required the State Department of Education to develop a program of accountability for the public schools in Mississippi. In response to this requirement the State Department developed in 1978 the Accountability and Instructional Management (AIM) program. All local school districts must have an operational AIM program by 1984.

The AIM program is a very sound approach to accountability. The program has great potential for improving instruction in Mississippi public schools by making instructional management possible. Some difficulties have been identified, however, in local attempts to implement the AIM program. The State Department of Education has been unable to provide the extensive technical assistance needed by school districts to implement the AIM plan.

State Policy and Other Requirements For Accountability And Assessment of Performance: The Education Reform Act reaffirms the Legislature's interest in educational accountability. The Act states that the educational policy of the state of Mississippi requires local school districts and their public schools to account for the product of their efforts. That policy also requires the establishment of a process for measuring and rating schools as well as the establishment of a method for monitoring their continued performance. Several provisions of the Act also require assessment of personnel performance.

In addition, the Act directs the State Board of Education to identify all functions of the State Department of Education that contribute to or comprise the state system of educational accountability. The Board is further directed to establish and maintain within the State Department the necessary organizational structure, policies, and procedures for effectively coordinating such functions.

State Department Of Education Assistance To Local School Districts: To ensure the effective local implementation of the AIM program as well as other parts of the state program of educational accountability and assessment of performance, the State Department of Education from and after July 1, 1983, shall provide to local school districts money, training, and other assistance necessary to implement and maintain the state program.

3.3.4. The School Executive Management Institute Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-4
House Bill 4, Section 11

Purposes and Duties: The School Executive Management Institute shall be established on July 1, 1984, to conduct thorough empirical studies and analyses of the school management needs of Mississippi school districts. The Institute shall then make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding standards and programs of training that aid in the development of administrative and management skills of local school administrators. Those recommended training programs that are approved by the State Board of Education shall then be conducted by the Institute under guidelines established by the State Board of Education.

Local School Administrator Participation: All local public school administrators are required to participate in training programs offered by the Institute.

Organization and Administration of the Institute: The Institute shall be established within the State Department of Education. A director for the Institute shall be appointed by the State Board of Education upon recommendation by the State Superintendent of Public Education. The State Superintendent shall assign, with the approval of the State Board of Education, sufficient staff members from the State Department of Education to the Institute. An advisory board to the Institute shall be appointed.

Purpose, Membership, Terms and Meetings of the Advisory Board: An Institute advisory board consisting of ten qualified members shall be appointed by the State Board of Education after consultation with the State Superintendent. The advisory board will offer recommendations to the Institute staff concerning the types of training to be offered. The advisory board's membership shall consist of two members from each congressional district. These ten members in turn must include three school administrators, one representative of Mississippi public junior colleges, one representative of a school of education in a college or university in Mississippi, two local school board members, one classroom teacher, and two lay persons. In making the initial appointments, three members shall be appointed for one year terms, three members shall be appointed for two year terms, two members shall be appointed for three year terms, and two members shall be appointed for four year terms. Thereafter, all members shall be appointed for four year terms.

The advisory committee shall meet when called by the director but in no event fewer than three times a year.

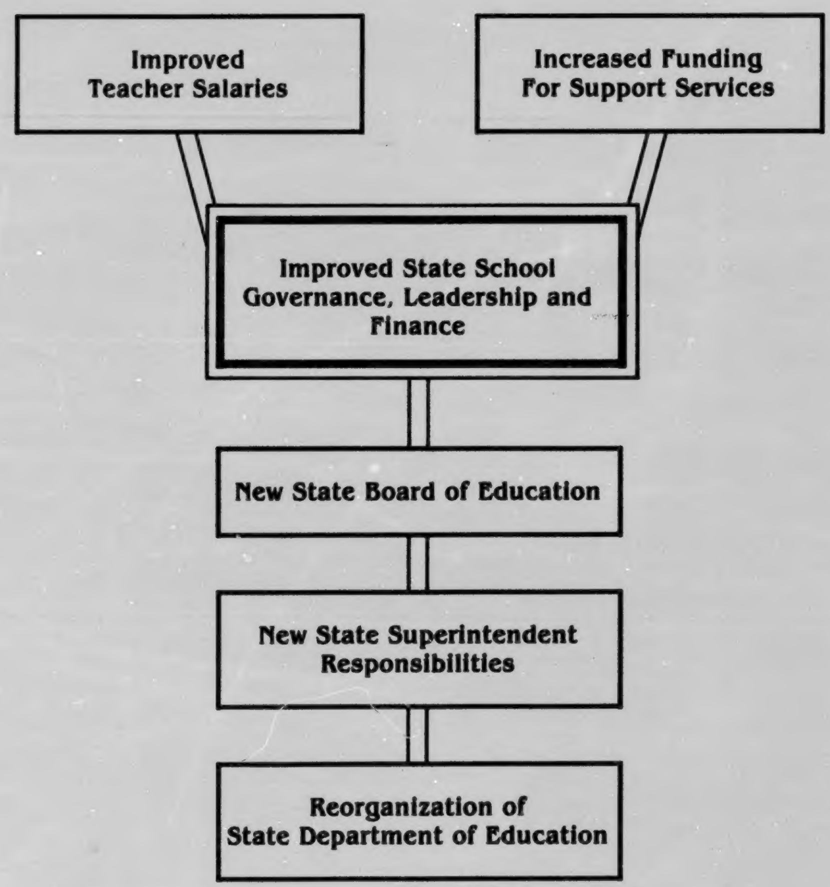
3.4. State School Governance, Leadership, And Finance

In the last analysis, improvements in public education will depend on what local school boards, teachers, and administrators are able and willing to do to ensure that quality education is available to all children. The State, however, can guide that process by setting standards, providing the required leadership, motivation, and technical assistance, and raising the needed financial resources.

By a constitutional amendment approved in November, 1982 a nine-member, appointed State Board of Education was established. Previously, the State Board of Education consisted of the Mississippi Secretary of State, the State Attorney General, and the State Superintendent of Education, all of whom were elected officials. The constitutional amendment removed these state officials from the Board and made the State Superintendency into an appointed instead of elected position. The appointment is to be made by the State Board of Education and confirmed by the Mississippi Senate.

After the passage of the constitutional amendment the Mississippi Legislature met in special session and enacted the Mississippi Educational Reform Act of 1982. The Act explicitly and clearly stated the educational policy of the State of Mississippi. Among its many provisions, the Act also redefined the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education, and it mandated the reorganization of the State Department of Education. In making these changes, the Act intends that the State Board, the State Superintendent, and the State Department should give especial emphasis to educational accountability, to long-range planning based on needs of local school districts and state educational priorities, and to technical assistance to local school districts.

STATE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND FINANCE


Improved Teacher Salaries
Increased Funding For Support Services
Improved State School Governance, Leadership and Finance
New State Board of Education
New State Superintendent Responsibilities
Reorganization of State Department of Education

In sum, the above provisions of the Educational Reform Act were designed to give clear direction to public education in Mississippi and to provide the effective organizational means at the state level needed to bring about educational improvement.

The Act also required action concerning the possible reorganization of some school districts. Minimum teacher salaries were increased and various adjustments made in the Minimum Foundation Program. The latter is the state program under which appropriations of the Mississippi Legislature are allocated to local public school districts. Finally, a number of sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972 relating to education were repealed.

3.4.1. Educational Policy Of The State Of Mississippi Is Clearly Stated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-2
House Bill 4, Section 2

In the Education Reform Act of 1982, the Mississippi Legislature declared the following to be educational policy for the State of Mississippi:

a) That the students, parents, general citizenry, local schoolteachers and administrators, local governments, local school boards, and state government have a joint and shared responsibility for the quality of education delivered through the public education system in the State of Mississippi;

b) That a functionally literate school population should be produced;

c) That all students should master the most essential parts of a basic education;

d) That educational standards should be established, raised, and maintained;

e) That the quality of education should be improved by strengthening it and elevating its goals;

f) That quality education should be provided for all school-age children in the state;

g) That excellence and high achievement of all students should be the ultimate goal;

h) That the common efforts of students, parents, teachers, administrators and business and professional leaders for the establishment of specific goals for performance should be encouraged;

i) To improve instructional and administrative quality; to relate the education community to other policy-makers, to achieve increased competency among students, teachers and administrators; to provide for continuing professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators; to assure that the budget process, the planning function and the allocation of personnel of the State Department of Education are commensurate with its educational goals;

j) That the return on public education which is the single largest investment for the state be the effectiveness of the delivery system and the product it is designed to produce;

k) That the investment in public education can be justified on the basis of the economic benefits that will accrue both to the individual and to society, recognizing that the return on such investment is long term and dramatic progress is not immediate;

l) That emphasis must be placed upon early mastery of the skills necessary to success in school and that quality, performance-based early childhood education programs are an essential element of a comprehensive education system;

m) That local school districts and their public schools be required to account for the product of their efforts;

n) That the children of this state receive a period of instruction sufficient to train each in the basic educational skills adequate for the student to take his or her place in society and make a contribution as a citizen of this state, and that all children be encouraged to continue their education until they have completed high school;

o) To establish an accreditation system based upon measurable elements in school known to be related to instructional effectiveness, to establish a credible process for measuring and rating schools, to establish a method for monitoring continued performance, and to provide for a state response when performance is inadequate; and,

p) That the teachers of this state, to the extent possible, receive salaries that are at least equal to the average of the salaries received by teachers in the southeastern United States.

3.4.2. The State Board of Education

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-1 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 3

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-4
House Bill 4, Section 4

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-3 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 5

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-9 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 14 (2) (a)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-13 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 17 (2)

The Educational Reform Act is intended to make the State Board of Education a more purposeful organization. The Act does this by establishing educational policy for the State of Mississippi, by requiring that the State Board of Education carry out that policy, and by revising other duties and responsibilities of the Board. These revisions in turn permit the State Board to make the State Department of

Education into a more purposeful and effective tool for performing its appropriate functions and thereby improving education in Mississippi. Particular emphasis is given to policy-making; long range planning; the State Program of educational accountability and assessment of performance; technical assistance to local school districts; to the establishment of centralized, coordinated budgeting and management for the State Department of Education; and to the reorganization of the State Department. In the past the State Department of Education has lacked a well-defined, coordinated planning and budgeting process. A strong and well-organized State Department of Education, operating under the direction of the State Board of Education, is a necessity if Mississippi is to improve the quality of its elementary and secondary schools.

An Appointed State Board of Education: Prior to July 1, 1984, the State Board of Education for Mississippi shall consist of the State Superintendent of Education, the State Attorney General, and the Secretary of State. After July 1, 1984, the State Board of Education shall consist of members appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House, as described below.

Duties and Responsibilities: The appointed State Board of Education is directed to implement the State educational policy set forth in the Education Reform Act. To implement that policy, the appointed State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations as well as set standards and policies for the organization, operation, management, planning, budgeting, and programs of the State Department of Education. Specifically, the Board is directed to do the following:

(1) Design and maintain, with recommendations from the State Superintendent, a five-year plan and program for improvement of the Mississippi public school system. This plan shall set forth objectives for system performance and improvement. The plan also shall be the basis for budget requests and legislative initiatives.

(2) Establish and maintain a system-wide plan of performance, policy, and direction of public education not otherwise provided for.

(3) Establish and maintain within the State Department of Education the necessary organizational structure, policies, and procedures for effective implementation of the state system of educational accountability. Such policies and procedures shall clearly fix and delineate responsibilities for various aspects of the system's overall coordination, and for its effective management.

(4) Use the personnel of the State Department of Education to improve technical assistance given local school districts in regard to instruction and management.

(5) Establish and maintain a central budget policy.

(6) Establish and maintain within the State Department of Education a central management capacity under the direction of the State Superintendent of Education.

The State Board of Education is also required to perform a number of additional duties. The Board shall appoint the State Superintendent of Public Education and shall set his salary as well as the salaries of Deputy Superintendents, Associate Superintendents, and Divisional Directors. The Board shall adopt and maintain a curriculum and course of study to be used in the public schools. The management and investment of school funds is the responsibility of the State Board. Finally, the Board shall regulate all matters arising in the administration of the Mississippi public school system that are not otherwise provided for, and perform all other duties prescribed for it by the Education Reform Act or other applicable laws.

Membership, Method of Appointment, and Terms: The State Board of Education shall consist of nine members of whom none shall be an elected official. The Governor shall appoint the following five members for the specified terms:

(1) A resident of the Third Supreme Court District who shall serve an initial term of one year.
(2) A resident of the First Supreme Court District who shall serve an initial term of five years.
(3) A resident of the Second Supreme Court District who shall serve an initial term of nine years.
(4) A person employed on an active and full-time basis as a school administrator who shall serve an initial term of three years.
(5) A person employed on an active and full-time basis as a schoolteacher who shall serve an initial term of seven years.

The Lieutenant Governor shall appoint two members from the State at large, one of whom shall serve an initial term of four years and one of whom shall serve an initial term of eight years. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members from the State at large, one of whom shall serve an initial term of two years and one of whom shall serve an initial term of six years.

The initial terms of appointees shall begin on July 1, 1984, and all subsequent appointments shall begin on the first day of July for a term of nine years and continue until their successors are appointed and qualify; however, to ensure an orderly process of transition, the initial appointments shall be made not later than March 1, 1984. An appointment to fill a vacancy which arises for reasons other than by expiration of a term of office shall be for the unexpired term only. All members shall be appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate, and no member shall be actively engaged in the educational profession except as stated above.

The Organization and Operating Procedure of the State Board: The Board shall elect a chairman from its membership at the first meeting of the original Board members and every year thereafter. A majority of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business. The Board shall meet regularly once a month at such time as shall be designated by an order entered upon the minutes thereof. Special meetings of the Board shall be held upon call of the chairman or upon the call of a majority of the members thereof. The State Superintendent of Public Education shall be the Secretary of the Board. The Board shall hold its sessions at the seat of government.

The First Meeting of the Board: The first official meeting of the State Board shall be called by the Governor as soon after July 1, 1984, as is practical.

The Transition Period: In order to provide for an orderly transition following its appointment, the State Board of Education shall meet with and receive the cooperation of the elected State Superintendent of Public Education and the State Department of Education on any matters relating to the public school education system in the state until assuming its duties and authority on July 1, 1984. During this transition period, the State Board of Education shall formulate and adopt rules and regulations in accordance with Section 25-43-1 et seq. and formulate standards and priorities necessary for the orderly administration of the public education system of the state. Such rules, regulations, standards, and priorities shall become effective on July 1, 1984. The Board shall also require, as needed, data and information on program performance from any source relating to the public school system. The State Department of Education shall assist the Board in assuming its duties and shall provide any technical assistance as may be required.

Authority of Existing Board Repealed: As of July 1, 1984, Mississippi laws providing for a State Board of Education consisting of the State Superintendent of Education, the State Attorney General, and the Secretary of State are repealed.

3.4.3. The State Superintendent Of Public Education

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-9, As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 14

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-11, As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 15

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-12
House Bill 4, Section 16

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-13, As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 17 (2)

Duties and Responsibilities: On and after July 1, 1984, the State Superintendent of Public Education shall perform the duties assigned him by the State Board of Education. Among these duties shall be the following:

a) To serve as secretary to the State Board of Education.
b) To be the chief administrative officer of the State Department of Education.
c) To recommend to the State Board of Education rules and regulations for the supervision, efficient organization and conduct of the public schools, agricultural high schools, and the public junior colleges.
d) To collect data and make it available to the State Board for determining the proper distribution of the state elementary and secondary school funds.
e) To keep a complete record of all official acts of the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education.
f) To prepare, have printed, and furnish all officers who administer the laws pertaining to the public schools all blank forms and books needed for the performance of their duties.

g) To have printed in pamphlet form the Mississippi laws pertaining to the public schools. Included in those pamphlets shall also be the forms for conducting school business, the rules and regulations for governing schools that the State Superintendent or the State Board recommend for inclusion, and any other such matters of public interest relating to the schools.

h) To meet annually with all school district superintendents at a time and place designated by the State Superintendent to collect facts pertaining to the public schools.

i) To advise all superintendents upon all matters involving the welfare of the schools and, at the request of any superintendent, give an opinion upon a written statement of facts on all questions and controversies arising out of the interpretation and construction of the school laws.

j) To require annually of all superintendents, and as often as the State Superintendent thinks is proper, detailed reports on the educational business of the local school districts.

k) To prepare under the direction of the State Board of Education the annual report of the Board to the Legislature. That report shall be printed on or before the tenth of January of each year. The report shall contain the following information:

    (1) The receipts and disbursements of all school funds handled by the State Board.
    (2) The number of school districts and for each district the number of school teachers employed, school administrators employed, pupils taught, and the attendance record of pupils.
    (3) County and school district tax levies for each school district, agricultural high school, and public junior college.
    (4) The condition of vocational education; a list of schools to which federal and state aid has been given; a detailed statement of the expenditures of these federal and state funds; and an assessment of the vocational education courses now being taught as compared to the vocational education courses actually needed to meet the demands of the present and future work environment.
    (5) A statement by the Board of general matters, information, and recommendations concerning the educational interests the State Board feels should be brought to the attention of the Legislature.

l) To determine the number of children of school age in each school district.

m) To perform other duties prescribed by the State Board of Education.

The Education Reform Act also requires that the State Superintendent shall be responsible for all planning functions of the State Department of Education. These planning functions include the collection, analysis, and interpretation of all information, test results, evaluations, and other data that are used to formulate policy, identify areas of concern and need, as well as to serve as a basis for short-range and long-range planning. Such planning functions shall also include assembling data, conducting appropriate studies and surveys, and sponsoring research and development activities designed to provide information about educational needs and the effect of alternative educational practices.

Finally, the State Superintendent shall set, subject to the approval of the State Personnel Board, the compensation of all employees of the State Department of Education.

The Qualifications Of The State Superintendent Of Public Education: The State Superintendent shall have at least a master's degree in any field and a minimum of five years experience in administration in the education field.

The Appointment Process: The Superintendent of Public Education shall be appointed by the State Board of Education with the advice and consent of the Mississippi Senate. The Superintendent shall serve at the Board's will and pleasure.

Salary and Bonding: The State Board of Education shall set the salary of the State Superintendent of Education. The State Superintendent shall give bond in the amount of $75,000. In the event the expense of administering the State Department of Education ever exceeds the amount appropriated for that purpose by the Mississippi Legislature, the Superintendent shall be liable and required to restore any such excess.

Term Of The Last Elected Superintendent Of Education: The term of the last elected State Superintendent shall be extended until July 1, 1984.

3.4.4. The State Department of Education

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-3 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 5 (1)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-1 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 6 (1) (2) (3)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-9 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 14 (2) (a)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-11 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 15 (2) (b)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-13 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 17

Duties: The State Department of Education shall perform those duties assigned it by the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, and applicable laws.

Governance and Administration: The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations and set standards and policies for the organization, operation, management, planning, budgeting, and programs of the State Department of Education. The State Superintendent of Education shall be the chief administrative officer for the State Department of Education and shall administer the Department in accordance with the policies established by the State Board of Education as well as applicable laws.

Reorganization Of The State Department: From July 1, 1983, to July 1, 1984, the State Department of Education shall consist of a State Superintendent of Public Education, a director of the division of finance and administration, a director of the division of instruction, a director of the division of school building and transportation services, a director of the division of vocational and technical education (who shall be an associate state superintendent of public education), a director of the division of vocational rehabilitation, a director of the division of junior colleges and such supervisors, assistants or employees as may be necessary for the proper functioning of the above divisions.

After July 1, 1984, there shall be a State Department of Education which shall be under the direction and supervision of the State Superintendent of Public Education. The State Department of Education shall be organized into functional divisions as established by the State Board of Education. These divisions shall include any divisions established by law with the directors of such divisions performing those divisional duties prescribed by law as well as any duties prescribed by the State Board of State Superintendent.

Reorganization For Educational Accountability: In addition to the above reorganization, the State Board is directed to identify all functions of the State Department of Education that contribute to or comprise a part of the state system of educational accountability. Once these functions have been identified, the Board shall establish and maintain within the State Department the necessary organizational structure, policies, and procedures for effectively coordinating such functions. These policies and procedures shall clearly assign and specify the responsibilities for various aspects of the system as well as for the overall coordination and effective management of the entire accountability system.

Personnel Management: After July 1, 1984, the deputy superintendents, associate superintendents, and directors shall be selected by and hold office subject to the will of the State Superintendent of Public Education subject to the approval of the State Board of Education. All other personnel shall be competitively appointed by the State Superintendent and shall be dismissed only for cause in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Personnel Board. The State Board of Education shall set the salary of the State Superintendent of Education, the deputy superintendents, associate superintendents, and divisional directors. The State Superintendent, subject to the approval of the State Personnel Board, shall fix the amount of compensation of all employees of the State Department of Education. All salaries, compensation or expenses of any of the personnel of the department shall be paid upon the requisition of the State Superintendent of Public Education and warrant issued thereunder by the State Auditor out of funds appropriated by the Legislature in a lump sum upon the basis of budgetary requirements submitted by the Superintendent of Education or out of funds otherwise made available. The entire expense of administering the department shall never exceed the amount appropriated therefor, plus funds received from other sources other than state appropriations. For a violation of this provision, the superintendent shall be liable, and he and the sureties on his bond shall be required to restore any such excess.

3.4.5. School And School District Reorganization

Mississippi Code, Section 37-17-6 (11)
House Bill 4, Section 12 (11)

A Survey Of Educational Needs: The State Education Finance Commission shall conduct a survey of the educational needs of each county in the state from the standpoint of the efficiency of operating schools and school districts.

A Plan And Process For Reorganization: After completion of the survey, the State Educational Finance Commission shall develop a plan relating to school district and school consolidation and reorganization. The Educational Finance Commission shall submit this plan to the State Board of Education not later than July 1, 1985. From and after July 1, 1986, the State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, shall require school districts to comply with said plan as a criterion for meeting accreditation standards. The State Board of Education shall, for those schools failing to meet accreditation standards, establish a program of development to be complied with in order to receive state funds, except as otherwise provided in Section 206, Mississippi Constitution of 1890. The State Board, in establishing these standards, shall provide for notice to schools and sufficient time and aid to enable schools to attempt to meet these standards.

3.4.6. Teacher Salaries are Increased

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-7 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 23

A New Type of Teaching Certificate: The type valid teacher's certificate held shall be used to establish the minimum salary to be paid a teacher. The type of certificate awarded a teacher shall depend on the level of professional training achieved by the teacher. Prior to July 1, 1983, there three types of certificates with minimum salaries for first year teachers set as follows for the 1982-83 school year:

A	Bachelor's Degree	$10,475.00
AA	Master's Degree	11,275.00
AAA	Specialist's Certificate and Doctor's Degree	12,075.00

After July 1, 1983, there shall be four types of certificates with minimum salaries for first year teachers set as follows for the 1983-84 school year:

A	Bachelor's Degree	11,475.00
AA	Master's Degree	12,275.00
AAA	Specialist's Certificate	13,075.00
AAAA	Doctor's Degree	13,875.00

These minimum salaries for 1983-84 were increased an average of 10.4 percent over the minimum salaries of 1982-83.

Increase in Longevity Increments: For teachers holding a Class A certificate, the minimum base pay specified above shall be increased by $275.00 for each year of teaching experience up to a maximum of fourteen years. For a Class AA certificate, the minimum base pay shall be increased by $300.00 for each year up to a maximum of sixteen years. For the Class AAA certificate, the increase shall be $325.00 for each year up to seventeen while for the Class AAAA certificate, the increase shall be $350 up to a maximum of seventeen years.

Minimum Salary And Variable Pay: Section 37-19-11 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 provides that no school district shall pay any teacher who is paid from the Minimum Foundation Program an amount less than the state minimum salary. Nothing in this Section, however, prohibits any school district from adopting or continuing a program or plan whereby teachers are paid varying salaries according to teaching ability, classroom performance, and other similar standards if additional funds are available.

3.4.7. Adjustments In The Minimum Foundation Program Are Made

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-7 As Amended House Bill 4, Section 23

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-11 As Amended House Bill 4, Section 24

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-21 As Amended House Bill 4, Section 25

Mississippi Code, Section 25-15-101 As Amended House Bill 4, Section 28

Definition of the Minimum Foundation Program: In the 1950s when Mississippi last revised educational financing arrangements, the Legislature established a "foundation" program for providing state aid to each local district. The concept of the program is that the state should ensure a minimum level of funds in each of the districts. Those funds, which could be used only for certain specified purposes, were to be an amount the Legislature considered adequate to support the minimum acceptable education program in a district. Local districts, if they wish, can build on this state-guaranteed foundation and use local funds to lower pupil-teacher ratios, provide higher salaries, and make other program improvements.

The Education Reform Act made certain adjustments in the Minimum Foundation Program.

Required Group Insurance: Beginning with the 1984-85 school year, school districts shall provide a policy or policies of group insurance covering life, health, and hospitalization. Each school district which provides $250.00 or more per certificated personnel for group health and/or life insurance out of local funds shall be allotted an additional $175.00 under the Minimum Foundation Program for supportive services. No state funds, however, shall be used for the purchase of group health and/or life insurance.

Increase in State Funds For Supportive Services: Effective July 1, 1983, under the Minimum Foundation Program the state funds allocated to local school districts for supportive services is increased to $2,940.00 per teacher unit. Each school district which provides $250.00 or more per certificated personnel out of local funds per year for group health and/or life insurance shall be allotted under the Minimum Foundation Program, an additional $175.00 per certificated personnel.

Adjustments To Local Salary Supplements: Local school districts that have been paying during the preceding year an average local salary supplement of $2,000.00 or more per teacher paid with Minimum Foundation Program funds may reduce the amount of local supplement paid per teacher. Other school districts shall not make such reductions.

Maintenance Of Local Tax Support: No school district may receive any Minimum Foundation Program funds for any school year if the aggregate amount of support from local ad valorem taxation is reduced during a school year below the amount for the previous year. If, however, there is a loss from one school year to the next in the number of Minimum Foundation Program teacher units or if there is a decrease in the total assessed value of taxable property in the school district, then the amount of local support for the school district from ad valorem taxes may be reduced proportionately.

Chapter 4

Financing The Education Reform Act

4. FINANCING THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT

The implementation of major provisions of the Education Reform Act will be financed by new taxes projected to yield the following amounts:

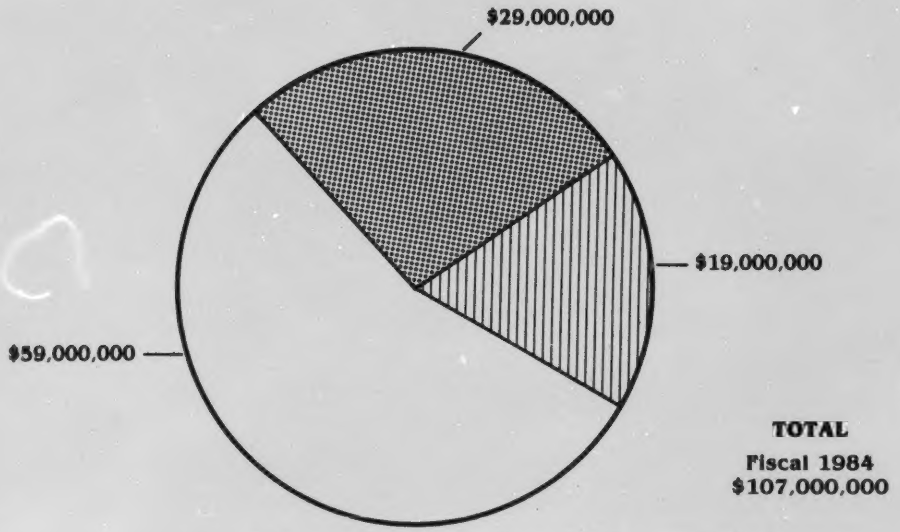
	Fiscal 1984	Fiscal 1985
State Sales Tax and Use Tax:	$59,000,000	$62,500,000
Corporate Income Tax:	29,000,000	29,500,000
Individual Income Tax:	19,000,000	20,000,000
Total:	$107,000,000	$112,000,000

The amounts listed above are estimates provided by the State Tax Commission.

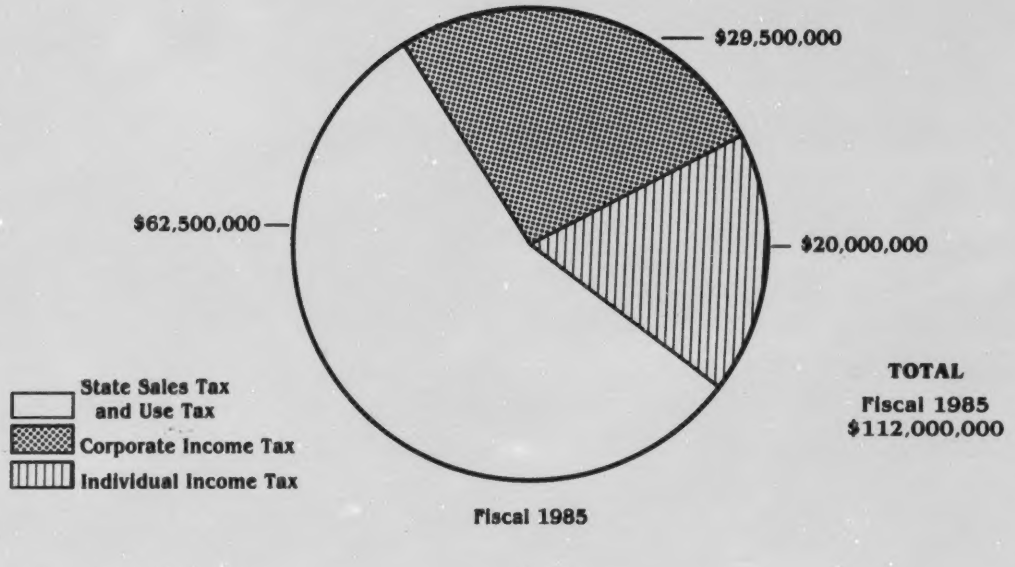
Local school districts will provide funds for construction or renovation needed to provide kindergarten classrooms. Some funds may be available from the Education Finance Commission for this purpose.

Local schools would also provide the funds needed for any other kindergarten costs not paid for from state funds.

FINANCING THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT



Fiscal 1984



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Chapter 5

Implementing The Education Reform Act

5: IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT

This chapter states in chronological order the steps that must be taken to implement each part of the Education Reform Act described in Chapter 3. The persons or groups who should perform those steps are identified. The dates by which those steps must take place are listed. Finally, there is an index for implementation. This index lists each person or group (for example, the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Education, etc.) that has a role to perform in implementation. Beside the name of each person or group is listed the page number in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 of every step that person or group should perform to implement the Act.

In summary, this chapter is intended to be a convenient guide to determining what is to be done, by whom, and when, in order to implement the Education Reform Act.

5.1. Student Achievement

The Education Reform Act states that the educational policy of the State of Mississippi includes the following:

- Public schools must produce a functionally literate population.
- Public schools must establish, raise, and maintain educational standards
- Public schools must ensure that all students master the essential parts of a basic education.
- Public schools must emphasize early mastery of the skills necessary for success in school.

The State's educational policy also maintains that performance-based early childhood education programs are an essential element of a comprehensive educational system. In addition, children in that comprehensive educational system should receive a period of instruction sufficient to train each in the basic education skills, while all children should be encouraged to continue their education until they have completed high school.

In keeping with these policies, the Act establishes the Early Childhood Education Program, the Mississippi Reading Improvement Program, and revises the statewide testing program for students. New graduation requirements are set. Compulsory school attendance is required, while assistance must be provided local school districts for dropout prevention programs.

5.1.1. A Mississippi Early Childhood Education Program Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-21-7 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 26 (1) And Section 27

July 1, 1983: The State Board of Education establishes within the

State Department of Education the Early Childhood Education Grant-in-Aid Program.

By April 1, 1984: The State Board of Education establishes criteria that local school districts must meet to be eligible to receive funds from the Grant-in-Aid Program.

The State Board of Education may work with the Commission on School Accreditation in developing these criteria since all kindergarten programs must by the 1986-87 school year comply with minimum performance standards established by the Commission.

The State Department of Education then develops forms each local district must use to apply for Grant-in-Aid funds. The criteria for eligibility must be printed on these forms.

1985 Legislative Session: The Mississippi Legislature appropriates up to five million dollars for the Grant-in-Aid Program during school year 1985-86.

Prior to May 31, 1985: The State Board of Education establishes the procedure school districts must follow to apply for Grant-in-Aid funds.

The State Board of Education establishes a procedure for approving Grant-in-Aid applications from local school districts.

The State Department of Education develops a formula for allocating appropriated Grant-in-Aid funds to local school districts. The State Department submits the formula to the State Board of Education for approval prior to use.

Local school districts decide whether to implement a kindergarten program in the 1985-86 school year.

Each local school district that elects to implement a kindergarten program in the 1985-86 school year applies on the appropriate forms to the State Department of Education for Grant-in-Aid funds.

Spring 1985: Each school district makes the additional arrangements necessary for implementing a kindergarten program. These arrangements include but are not limited to recruiting teachers, arranging for space, selecting and purchasing materials and supplies, and securing any additional funds needed to pay the cost of the program.

By July 1, 1985:	The State Department of Education determines which applications for kindergarten programs are acceptable, determines the amount of money each district shall receive out of available funds, and notifies the district.
1986 Legislative session and Regular Sessions Thereafter:	The Mississippi Legislature appropriates up to forty million dollars for the Mississippi Early Childhood Grant-in-Aid Program for the next school year.
By May 31, 1986 and by May 30 of Each Succeeding Year:	Each local school district **must** apply (on the appropriate forms) to the State Department of Education for Grant-in-Aid funds to support its kindergarten programs during the next school year.
By July 1, 1986 and Each July 1 thereafter	The State Department of Education determines which applications for kindergarten programs are acceptable, determines the amount of money each district shall receive out of available funds, and notifies the district.
Prior to the 1986-87 School Year:	The Commission on School Accreditation develops minimum performance standards for local district kindergarten programs.
By the 1986-87 School Year	The Commission on School Accreditation develops a procedure for determining whether local district kindergarten programs meet these minimum standards.
Prior to May 31, 1986 and by May 30 of Each Succeeding Year:	Each local school district realizes it is required to implement in the following school year a kindergarten program that has been approved in advance by the State Department of Education and that complies with the minimum performance standards developed by the Commission on School Accreditation. Each local school district follows the established procedures to obtain approval of its program and to secure Grant-in-Aid funds to support the program.
Prior to and After May 31, 1986 and Each Year Thereafter:	Each school district makes the additional arrangements necessary for implementing a kindergarten program.

The 1986-87 School Year: Each local district implements an approved kindergarten program.

By December 1, 1986, and Annually Thereafter Through December 1, 1990: The State Board of Education through the State Department of Education makes an analysis of the effect of kindergarten programs and submits the analysis to the Mississippi Legislature.

July 1, 1990: The legislation authorizing the Mississippi Early Childhood Grant-in-Aid Program is repealed.

For Details See Chapter 3, Part 3.1.1.

5.1.2. The Mississippi Reading Improvement Program Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-21-7 As Amended

House Bill 4, Section 26 (2)

As Soon After January 1, 1983, As Possible The State Department of Education develops, distributes, and otherwise communicates rules, regulations, and other standards for implementing the Reading Improvement Program.

The State Department also develops a procedure for reviewing and approving plans for the Reading Improvement Program submitted by local school districts.

As Soon After January 1, 1983, As Possible: Each local school district appoints the necessary personnel to plan, supervise, and report on the district's Reading Improvement Program.

Each local school district submits to the State Department of Education a plan for implementing the Reading Improvement Program in that district's first grade classes. The plan must conform to the rules, regulations, and other standards established by the State Department and must be submitted by the date and in the manner prescribed by the State Department.

Each local school district also develops a plan of educational accountability and assessment of student performance in reading in grades one through six. This plan must accompany the district plan submitted to the State Department for the Reading Improvement Program.

Spring, 1983:	Local school districts develop criteria and a procedure for selecting the first grade assistant reading instructor.
A Date to be Set by The State Department of Education:	The State Department of Education notifies each district whether the district plan has met all standards and has been approved
1983 and Annually Thereafter:	The State Department of Education develops and assists in the implementation of a statewide uniform training program for teachers and assistant instructors.
Summer, 1983, the 1983-84 School Year, and Annually Thereafter:	Each local school district implements an annual orientation session for teachers and assistant instructors that emphasizes program goals. Each local school district holds periodic workshops for teachers on the effective use of the assistant instructor. Each local school district provides training to assist instructors on specific instructional skills.
School Year 1983-84 and Annually Thereafter:	Each local school district, as part of its educational accountability and assessment of performance plan, evaluates the district's Reading Improvement Program.
School Year 1983-84 and Annually Thereafter	The State Department of Education evaluates the Reading Improvement Program through the use of an acceptable standardized testing system.
1984 Legislative Session and Annually Thereafter:	The Mississippi Legislature appropriates funds to operate the Reading Improvement Program during the next school year.
Prior to the 1984-85 School Year:	Each local school district takes the necessary steps to implement the Reading Improvement Program in the first and second grades.
Prior to the 1985-86 School Year:	Each local school district takes the necessary steps to implement the Reading Improvement Program in the first, second, and third grades.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.1.2.

5.1.3. A Program of Statewide Testing Is Mandated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-16-1, 37-16-3, 37-16-5, 37-16-7, 37-16-9
House Bill 4, Section 30 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (7)

July 1, 1984 and Thereafter:

The State Board of Education identifies all functions of the State Department of Education that contribute to or comprise a part of the state system of educational accountability.

The State Board then establishes and maintains within the State Department of Education the necessary organizational structure, policies, and procedure to perform and coordinate effectively those functions.

The State Department of Education implements a statewide testing program. As part of the program the Department does the following:

By April 1, 1984, and By April 1 of Each Year Thereafter:

(1) Establishes with the approval of the State Board of Education minimum performance standards related to the goals for education contained in the State Board's plan for public education. These minimum performance standards shall be set for reading, writing, and mathematics as well as any other subject areas the Board designates.

Each Year As Determined:

(2) Develops and administers in the public schools a statewide program of testing to determine the educational achievement of students as well as the degree of student mastery of the state minimum performance standards. Testing shall be done in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11.

(3) Monitors the results of the statewide testing program. At any time the average of the students' composite test scores for a school drops below the state minimum performance standards, the State Department of Education notifies the district superintendent, the school principal, and the school advisory committee or other existing parent group of the situation. Such notification must be provided within thirty days of the date the deficiency was identified.

(4) Monitors the results of the statewide testing program. At any time the average of the students' test scores in reading, mathematics, and other basic subject areas selected by the State Board of Education drops below the state minimum performance standards for those subject areas, the State Department of Education notifies the district superintendent, the school principal, the school advisory committee or other existing parent groups of the situation. Such notification must be provided within thirty days of the date the deficiency is identified.

(5) Provides technical assistance to the local school district to identify the causes of the above deficiencies and recommends courses of action to correct the deficiencies.

(6) Provides technical assistance to local school districts that wish to develop student performance standards in addition to the established state minimum standards.

Periodically: Each local school board assesses student performance and achievement in each district school.

By an Unspecified Date: The State Board of Education develops a functional literacy examination to be used by every public high school in Mississippi. Successful completion of the examination is a requirement for high school graduation. The examination shall be developed and administered in a manner prescribed after a public hearing and consideration by the State Board.

By an Unspecified Date: The State Board of Education after a public hearing and consideration, has changes made as necessary in the statewide testing program's instruments and procedures to accommodate students with identified handicaps or disabilities.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.1.3.

5.1.4. High School Graduation Requirements Are To Be Revised

Mississippi Code, Sections 37-16-7, 37-16-9, 37-16-11
House Bill 4, Section 30 (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

Prior to the 1984-85 School Year:

Each local school district revises its high school graduation requirements. These requirements include at a minimum the following:

(1) Mastery of the minimum performance standards for the eleventh grade that are established by the State Board of Education as part of the statewide testing program.

(2) Demonstrated ability to successfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations. This ability shall be measured by a functional literacy examination developed in a manner prescribed by the State Board of Education.

(3) Completion of a minimum number of academic credits and other requirements prescribed by the district school board.

As Soon As Possible After The Revised Local Graduation Requirements Are Established And Before The 1984-85 School Year:

Each local school district notifies the appropriate students of the revised graduation requirements.

Each local school district develops and implements all other procedures for putting the revised graduation requirements into effect for the 1984-85 school year.

Prior to the 1984-85 School Year:

Each local school district develops and implements special graduation requirements for handicapped students.

By An Unspecified Date:

The State Board of Education establishes minimum performance standards for the eleventh grade in reading, writing, and mathematics. These standards are determined in a manner prescribed after a public hearing and consideration by the State Board.

The State Board of Education develops the functional literacy examination as well as guidelines for its administration. The examination and guidelines are developed in a manner prescribed after a hearing and consideration by the State Board.

The State Board of Education develops and implements special graduation requirements for handicapped students.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.1.4.

5.1.5. A Study Of Subject Matter Mastery Is Required Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-8 (b) House Bill 4, Section 7 (b)

Prior to July 1, 1984: The State Department of Education conducts a study of mastery of subject matter Mississippi Public school students.

By July 1, 1984: The State Department of Education reports the findings of the study to the State Board of Education.

The 1985 Legislative Session: The State Board of Education submits the findings of the study to the Mississippi Legislature along with a statement of any corrective action taken and recommendations for any further corrective action that is needed.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.1.5.

5.1.6. The Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law Is Revised And Strengthened

Mississippi Code, Section 37-13-91 as amended House Bill 4, Section 21

Mississippi Code, Section 43-21-355 As Amended House Bill 4, Section 21

Prior to the 1983-84 School Year And Annually Thereafter: The State Board of Education establishes a procedure for determining the number of school attendance officers to be allotted to each youth court or family court and notifies the judges.

The State Board of Education develops, has printed, and distributes to all school attendance officer the blank certificate of enrollment

Prior to the 1983-84 School Year: Each youth court or family court establishes a recruitment and selection process for school attendance officers.

Each youth court or family court appoints the number of school attendance officers.

Each youth court or family court appoints the number of school attendance officers allotted to it by the State Board of Education.

Each youth court or family court makes all administrative and other arrangements necessary for supervising, housing, paying, and otherwise providing for the effective functioning of the school attendance officer.

Prior to the 1983-84 School Year and Thereafter:

The Governor's Commission on Children and Youth provides assistance to the youth and family courts in regard to the above matters.

The Governor's Commission on Children and Youth and/or other appropriate parties provide orientation and training to the youth and family court judges and other court personnel, including the school attendance officers, concerning the requirements of the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law, the duties of the courts and the school attendance officers, and any other matters necessary to the effective implementation of the Law.

Prior to September 15 of Each Year:

The parents, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child who is excused by the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law from attending a public or nonpublic school must file a completed "certificate of enrollment" with the school attendance officer of the youth or family court where the child resides.

The parents, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child attending a nonpublic school, or an appropriate official of that nonpublic school, shall file a completed "certificate of enrollment" with the school attendance officer of the youth or family court where the child resides.

Blank certificates of attendance are available from any school attendance officer.

Each School Year:

Each public school superintendent or school principal reports to the appropriate school attendance officer the nonenrollment of any child who is eligible to attend and who has not enrolled within fifteen calendar days after the first day of the school year.

Each public school district establishes and maintains procedures for determining which student absences from school are excused (as provided by Mississippi law) and which absences are unlawful.

Each public school superintendent reports to the appropriate school attendance officer any compulsory-school-age child who accumulates ten or more unlawful absences during the school year.

On or Before January 1, 1985: The State Board of Education reviews the results of the use of the formula established in the Education Reform Act for determining the number of school attendance officers allocated to each youth or family court. If the State Board finds the number excessive, it may implement a new formula and thereby reduce the number of school attendance officers.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.1.6.

5.1.7. Programs To Keep Children In School Voluntarily Are Encouraged

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-46
House Bill 4, Section 8 (c)

After July 1, 1983: Local school districts implement programs to keep children in school voluntarily and to prevent dropouts.

The State Department of Education provides technical assistance to local school districts for the development, implementation, and administration of such programs.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.1.7.

5.2. Preparation And Professional Growth Of School Teachers, Administrators, And Other Professionals

To improve student achievement requires competent teachers and administrators who are instructional leaders. The Education Reform Act therefore seeks to strengthen the preparation of teachers and administrators and to encourage their professional growth. Substantial changes are to be made in the criteria and process for certifying teachers and administrators to help ensure competence in the educational profession. Each school district must develop a state-approved comprehensive in-service staff development plan. That plan must address needs for improvement that are determined by an evaluation of the on-the-job performance of the district's personnel. The Act also requires the State to plan and implement a program to encourage and financially reward teachers, school administrators, and other certified personnel for approved individual professional development activities.

The Act, in addition, provides for the development of personnel appraisal systems that, among other things, may reward demonstrated competence and exemplary performance.

Finally, the shortage of math and science teachers in Mississippi is addressed by the establishment of a scholarship program to encourage prospective teachers and current teachers to prepare themselves to be licensed to teach math and science.

5.2.1. A Commission on Teacher And Administrator Education, and Development Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2
House Bill 4, Section 10

Prior to July 1, 1983:	The Governor appoints the initial fifteen members of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development and designates its chairman.
July 20, 1983, or Before:	The State Superintendent of Education convenes the first meeting of the Commission.
Prior to July 1, 1984:	The Commission establishes a procedure whereby all certified teachers must successfully complete a prescribed, in-service training program as a prerequisite for renewal of teacher certificates.
Prior to August 1, 1984:	The Commission develops a plan to encourage and financially reward teachers, administrators, and other certified personnel for professional development. The Commission develops a plan for managing the period during which teachers and administrators hold provisional certificates. All persons teaching or holding an administrative position for the first time in the public schools of Mississippi must serve this provisional period during which they are evaluated to determine whether a regular certificate should be granted them. As part of the above plan the Commission must establish the criteria, rules, and procedure these teachers and administrators must satisfy to receive regular certification at the end of the provisional period.
Prior to September 1, 1984:	The Commission develops recommendations to the State Board of Education for reform of teacher and administrator preparation, certification, and continuing professional development. These recommendations

will include elements of the plan for managing provisional certification.

The State Board of Education after consulting the State Superintendent appoints members of the Commission.

September 1, 1984: The terms of the Governor's appointees to the Commission expire and the terms of the State Board of Education appointees begin.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.2.1.

5.2.2. Changes Are Made In Beginning Teacher And Administrator Certification

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2 (9-13) (19-20)
House Bill 4, Section 10 (9-13) (19-20)

By August 1, 1984: The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development develops a plan for the management of the provisional period of all teachers and administrators who hold provisional certificates.

By August 1, 1984: The Commission submits its management plan to the State Board of Education.

August 1, 1984, to July, 1986: The State Board of Education acting through the Commission carries out pilot projects to test and revise the management plan.

By July 1, 1986: The State Board of Education approves a final plan for the management of the provisional period.

By School Year 1986-87 and Thereafter: The State Board of Education acting through the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development puts into effect and administers the management plan for the provisional period.

Included as part of this plan is a procedure by which each school or school district reports to the Commission about the performance of each teacher and administrator holding provisional certification.

School Year 1986-87 and Thereafter:	Local schools and school districts report to the Commission about the performance of each teacher and administrator holding provisional certification.
By School Year 1986-87 and Thereafter:	Local school districts develop an in-service training plan for beginning teachers, have their plans approved by the State Board of Education, and have the plans in effect.
Unspecified Date:	The State Board of Education establishes an evaluation unit to monitor the provisional teacher and administrator program to determine the weaknesses in the preparation of provisional teachers and administrators.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.2.2

5.2.3. In-Service Training Is Required

Mississippi Code, Section 37-17-8
House Bill 4, Section 13

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2 (12) (14)
House Bill 4, Section 10 (12) (14)

Prior to the 1984-85 School Year and Annually Thereafter:	Each school district superintendent appoints a district committee to prepare a comprehensive in-service staff development plan for the district.
Prior to the 1984-85 School Year and Annually Thereafter:	The school district superintendent decides whether to approve the plan. When approved, the superintendent submits the plan to the Commission on School Accreditation. The Commission on School Accreditation develops a procedure for processing and evaluating school districts' inservice plans.
Prior to the 1984-85 School Year and Annually Thereafter:	The Commission on School Accreditation decides which plans to approve.
Prior to the 1984-85 School Year:	The Commission on School Accreditation establishes a formula for allocating state funds for in-service training to local school districts with state-approved plans.

Prior to the 1984-85 School Year and Annually Thereafter:	The State Board of Education recommends to the Legislature the amount of funds which shall be appropriated for in-service training.
The 1984-85 School Year:	Each school district has its state-approved plan in effect.
After July 1, 1984:	Certified teachers must successfully complete their district's state-approved in-service plan as a condition for renewal of all teacher certificates.
Prior to the 1986-87 School Year:	Each school district develops an in-service training program for beginning teachers.
Prior to the 1986-87 School Year:	The school district submits its plan for a training program for beginning teachers to the State Board of Education.
Prior to the 1986-87 School Year:	The State Board of Education develops a procedure for processing and evaluating school district in-service plans. The State Board of Education decides which plans to approve.
The 1986-87 School Year:	Each school district has a state-approved in-service program for beginning teachers in effect.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.2.3.

5.2.4. A Program For Professional Development Is Mandated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-2 (15) (16) (17)

House Bill 4, Section 10 (15) (16) (17)

Prior to August 1, 1984	The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development prepares a plan for implementing a program to encourage and financially reward professional development by individual teachers, school administrators, and other certified school personnel. The Commission submits the plan to the State Board of Education.

After August 1, 1984: The State Board of Education establishes a Professional Development Program which may be based on the plan submitted by the Commission.

August 1, 1984 and Thereafter: The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, and Development administers the Professional Development Program.

For Details See Chapter 3, Part 3.2.4.

5.2.5. A Personnel Appraisal And Compensation System Is To Be Developed

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-46 (b)
House Bill 4, Section 8 (b)

By an Unspecified Date: Local School districts may develop and implement a personnel appraisal and compensation system for all employees.

July 1, 1983, and Thereafter: The State Department of Education provides technical assistance to local school districts to develop, plan, and administer a personnel appraisal and compensation system.

January 5, 1986: The State Board of Education reports to the Legislature with recommendations based on the personnel appraisal and compensation system developed under this subsection of the Education Reform Act.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.2.5.

5.2.6. A Science And Math Teacher Scholarship Program Is Created

Mississippi Code, Section 37-101-281
House Bill 4, Section 29

Prior to July 1,1983: The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning establishes regulations necessary for the implementation of the scholarship program.

July 1, 1983: The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning implements and administers thereafter the scholarship program.

July 1, 1988: The legislation establishing the scholarship program is repealed and the program discontinued.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.2.6.

5.3. Local School Management

The Education Reform Act seeks to improve student achievement by improving the learning environment and especially by improving the quality of instruction students experience in that environment. One approach to improving instructional quality is to improve the preparation and continuing education of teachers. Section 3.2 of this chapter identifies the provisions of the Education Reform Act intended to bring about teacher improvement.

Another approach to improving instructional quality is to improve the instructional management of local school districts. In recent years research has identified characteristics of effective schools and effective classrooms. This research identifies those actions of teachers and administrators that contribute more effectively to learning than other actions. In short, the research has identified the teacher and administrator performance that causes students to learn more effectively. The Education Reform Act therefore mandates the establishment of a performance-based school accreditation system. This system will assess the extent to which those actions demonstrated by research to positively affect student behavior and improve academic achievement are present in the school. The system therefore has the capacity to improve local management by setting performance standards local management must meet.

The Education Reform Act also revises the procedure for carrying out school accreditation reviews. This revision was made in order to remedy major weaknesses in previous procedure and to assure that schools are indeed impartially and objectively evaluated for accreditation purposes. By thus protecting the integrity of the school accreditation process, the capacity of the performance-based accreditation system to improve local school management is maintained.

The intent of these changes in the school accreditation standards and procedure is to give school accreditation greater meaning, credibility, prestige, and respect.

The act further seeks to improve local district instructional management by requiring a statewide study to be conducted of the extent to which teachers are teaching out of their fields of certification. This study will permit the State Board of Education to determine how widespread this ineffective school management practice is and will provide a basis for determining any needed action to correct the situation.

The Act continues and strengthens the state's program of educational accountability and assessment of instructional performance, as noted in other sections of this report. The Act also requires the State Department of Education to provide training and assistance to local school districts to ensure that those districts have the management capability and financial resources to implement locally the state program of accountability and assessment.

Finally, a School Executive Management Institute is established to develop and implement training programs designed to improve the performance of school administrators.

5.3.1. A Performance-Based Accreditation System Is To Be Established For All Public Elementary And Secondary Schools

Mississippi Code, Section 37-17-6

House Bill 4, Section 12

Prior to July 1, 1983:	The Governor appoints the chairman and other members of the Performance-based School Assessment Task Force.
Prior to July 1, 1983:	The State Superintendent assigns a staff member from the State Department of Education to be the Task Force executive secretary and assigns other staff members to serve as Task Force Staff.
July 1, 1983:	This Task Force begins its work.
April 30, 1984:	The Task Force files this report with the Commission on School Accreditation system.
By July 1, 1984:	The State Board of Education acting through the Commission on School Accreditation develops an interim performance-based accreditation system.
July 1, 1984 to July 1, 1986:	The State Department of Education acting through the Commission on School Accreditation carries out a two-year field test of the interim performance-based accreditation system and makes necessary modifications.
By July 1, 1984:	The State Board of Education creates an accreditation audit unit under the Commission on School Accreditation.
By December 1, 1984, and Thereafter:	The Commission on School Accreditation selects, approves and assigns all persons who conduct on-site accreditation reviews.

Audit teams train those persons to conduct the on-site accreditation reviews.

School Year 1984-85 and Thereafter: All on-site accreditation evaluation teams submit their reports directly to the Commission of School Accreditation.

Prior to July 1986: The State Board of Education with the assistance of the Commission on School Accreditation revises the current schedule of classes of school accreditation to reflect the performance of schools.

July 1, 1986: The State Board of Education acting through the Commission on School Accreditation implements a permanent performance-based school accreditation system and a revised schedule of classes of school accreditation.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.3.1.

5.3.2. A Study Of Teaching Out Of Field Is Mandated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-8
House Bill 4, Section 7

By July 1, 1984: The State Department of Education completes a study of teachers teaching out of their fields of certification.

July 1, 1984: The State Department of Education submits the results of this study to the State Board of Education.

1985 Legislative Session: The State Board of Education submits the results of this study to the Legislature along with recommendations for any corrective action.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.3.2.

5.3.3. Assistance To Local School Districts For Implementation Of A State Program Of Educational Accountability And Assessment of Performance Is Required

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-2 (m) (o)
House Bill 4, Section 2 (m) (o)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-3 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 5

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-46
House Bill 4, Section 8 (a)

Mississippi Code, Sections 37-16-1, 37-16-3, 37-16-5, 37-16-7, 37-16-9, 37-16-11
House Bill 4, Section 30

From and After July 1, 1983: The State Department of Education shall provide local school districts money, training, and other assistance necessary to implement and maintain a state program of educational accountability and assessment of performance.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.3.3.

5.3.4. The School Executive Management Institute Is Established

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-4
House Bill 4, Section 11

July 1, 1984: The State Board of Education plans the School Executive Management Institute, appoints an Institute Director upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education, and appoints an Institute advisory board after consulting with the State Superintendent.

July 1, 1984: The State Superintendent recommends an Institute director to the State Board of Education and assigns staff members to the Institute.

The State Superintendent consults with the State Board of Education about appointments to the Institute's Advisory board.

July 1, 1984: The School Executive Management Institute is established within the State Department of Education.

After July 1, 1984: The Institute conducts thorough studies of school management needs of Mississippi school districts.

The Institute recommends to the State Board of Education standards and programs of training that develop administrative and management skills of local school administration.

After July 1, 1984: The State Board of Education decides which standards and training programs recommended by the Institute to approve.

After July 1, 1984: The Institute implements the training programs approved by the State Board of Education.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.3.4.

5.4. State School Governance, Leadership, And Finance

In the last analysis, improvements in public education will depend on what local school boards, teachers, and administrators are able and willing to do to ensure that quality education is available to all children. The State, however, can guide that process by setting standards, providing the required leadership, motivation, and technical assistance, and raising the needed financial resources.

By a constitutional amendment approved in November 1982, a nine-member, appointed State Board of Education was established. Previously, the State Board of Education consisted of the Mississippi Secretary of State, the State Attorney General, and the State Superintendent of Education, all of whom were elected officials. The constitutional amendment removed these state officials from the Board and made the State Superintendency into an appointed instead of an elected position. The appointment is to be made by the State Board of Education and confirmed by the Mississippi Senate.

After the passage of the constitutional amendment the Mississippi Legislature met in special session and enacted the Mississippi Educational Reform Act of 1982.

The Act explicitly and clearly stated the educational policy of the State of Mississippi. Among its many provisions, the Act also redefined the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education, and it mandated the reorganization of the State Department of Education. In making these changes, the Act intends that the State Board, the State Superintendent, and the State Department should give especial emphasis to educational accountability and to long-range planning based on needs of local school districts and state educational priorities, and to technical assistance to local school districts.

In sum, the above provisions of the Educational Reform Act were designed to give clear direction to public education in Mississippi and to provide the effective organizational means at the state level needed to bring about educational improvement.

The Act also required action concerning the possible reorganization of some school districts. Minimum teacher salaries were increased and various adjustments made in the Minimum Foundation Program. The latter is the state program under which appropriations of the Mississippi Legislature are allocated to local public school districts. Finally, a number of sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972 relating to education were repealed.

5.4.1. Educational Policy Of The State Of Mississippi Is Clearly Stated

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-2
House Bill 4, Section 2

In the Education Reform Act of 1982 the Mississippi Legislature declared the following to be educational policy for the State of Mississippi:

a) That the students, parents, general citizenry, local schoolteachers and administrators, local governments, local school boards, and state government have a joint and shared responsibility for the quality of education delivered through the public education system in the State of Mississippi;
b) That a functionally literate school population should be produced;
c) That all students should master the most essential parts of a basic education
d) That educational standards should be established, raised, and maintained;
e) That the quality of education should be improved by strengthening it and elevating its goals;
f) That quality education should be provided for all school-age children in the state;
g) That excellence and high achievement of all students should be the ultimate goal;
h) That the common efforts of student, parents, teachers, administrators and business and professional leaders for the establishment of specific goals for performance should be encouraged;
i) To improve instructional and administrative quality; to relate the education community to other policy-makers, to achieve increased competency among students, teachers and administrators; to provide for continuing professional development for teachers, counselors and administrators; to assure that the budget process, the planning function and the allocation of personnel of the State Department of Education are commensurate with its educational goals;
j) That the return on public education which is the single largest investment for the state be the effectiveness of the delivery system and the product it is designed to produce;
k) That the investment in public education can be justified on the basis of the economic benefits that will accrue both to the individual and to society, recognizing that the return on such investment is long term and dramatic progress is not immediate;

l) That emphasis must be placed upon early mastery of the skills necessary to success in school and that quality, performance-based early childhood education programs are an essential element of a comprehensive education system;

m) That local school districts and their public schools be required to account for the product of their efforts;

n) That the children of this state receive a period of instruction sufficient to train each in the basic educational skills adequate for the student to take his or her place in society and make a contribution as a citizen of this state, and that all children be encouraged to continue their education until they have completed high school;

o) To establish an accreditation system based upon measurable elements in school known to be related to instructional effectiveness, to establish a credible process for measuring and rating schools, to establish a method for monitoring continued performance, and to provide for a state response when performance is inadequate; and,

p) That the teachers of this state, to the extent possible, receive salaries that are at least equal to the average of the salaries received by teachers in the southeastern United States.

5.4.2. The State Board of Education

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-1 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 3

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-4
House Bill 4, Section 4

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-3 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 5

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-9 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 14 (2) (a)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-13 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 17 (2)

Prior to March 1, 1984: The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House appoint the members of the State Board of Education.

The 1984 Legislative Session: The Mississippi Senate confirms the appointees.

Prior to July 1, 1984:	The appointed State Board of Education meets, formulates, and adopts rules, regulations, standards, and priorities necessary for the orderly administration of the public education system. These rules, regulations, standards, and priorities shall become effective only July 1, 1984. The appointed State Board of Education establishes the criteria and selection process for appointing the State Superintendent of Education.
Prior to July 1, 1984:	The elected State Superintendent of Education and the State Department of Education provide all needed assistance and cooperation to the appointed State Board of Education.
As Soon As Practical After July 1, 1984:	The Governor calls the first official meeting of the appointed State Board of Education.
The First Offical Meeting of the State Board of Education and Annually Thereafter:	The State Board elects a chairman.
As Soon as Practical After July 1, 1984:	The State Board of Education appoints a State Superintendent of Education. The Mississippi Senate confirms the State Board's Appointment of the State Superintendent of Education.
July 1, 1984, and Thereafter:	The State Board of Education sets and implements state educational policy and performs all other duties prescribed by the Education Reform Act and any other applicable laws. For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.4.2.

5.4.3. The State Superintendent of Public Education

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-9 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 14

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-11, As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 15

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-12
House Bill 4, Section 16

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-13, As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 17 (2)

As Soon as Practical After July 1, 1984: The State Board of Education appoints the State Superintendent of Education.

Upon Taking Office: The State Superintendent of Education performs all duties assigned him by the State Board of Education, the Education Reform Act, and all other applicable laws.

The Mississippi Senate confirms the State Board's appointment of the State Superintendent of Education.

Upon Taking Office: The State Superintendent gives bond in the amount of $75,000.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.4.3.

5.4.4. The State Department of Education

Mississippi Code, Section 37-1-3 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 5 (1)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-1 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 6 (1) (2) (3)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-9 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 14 (2) (a)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-11 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 15 (2) (b)

Mississippi Code, Section 37-3-13 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 17

From July 1, 1983 to July 1, 1984 The State Department of Education is organized as prescribed by the Education Reform Act.

After July 1, 1984: The State Board of Education organizes the State Department of Education into functional divisions.

The State Board of Education reorganizes the State Department of Education to establish and implement an effective, coordinated state System of educational accountability.

The State Superintendent of Education directs and supervises the State Department of Education.

The State Department of Education performs all duties assigned it by the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, the Education Reform Act, and all other applicable laws.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.4.4.

5.4.5. School And School District Reorganization

Mississippi Code, Section 37-17-6 (11)

House Bill 4, Section 12 (11)

Prior to July 1, 1985: The State Educational Finance Commission conducts a survey of the educational needs of each county in the state from the standpoint of the efficiencies of operating schools and school districts.

On the basis of the survey of educational needs, the State Educational Finance Commission develops a plan for school district and school consolidation and reorganization.

By July 1, 1985: The State Educational Finance Commission submits this plan to the State Board of Education.

From and After July 1, 1985: The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, directs that compliance with the Educational Finance Commission's plan for consolidation and consolidation is a requirement (or standard) for school district accreditation.

After July 1, 1986 The State Board of Education, for those districts failing to meet the consolidation and reorganization accreditation standard, shall establish a program of development to assist the districts in complying with this standard. This program of development must be established if local school districts are to continue to receive state funds.

The State Board provides sufficient notice, time, and aid to local school districts to enable schools to attempt to meet this accreditation standard.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.4.5.

5.4.6. Teacher Salaries Are Increased

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-7 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 23

The 1983 Legislative Session The Mississippi Legislature appropriates funds to provide for the salary increases mandated by the Education Reform Act.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.4.6.

5.4.7. Adjustments In The Minimum Foundation Program Are Made

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-7 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 23

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-11 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 24

Mississippi Code, Section 37-19-21 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 25

Mississippi Code, Section 25-15-101 As Amended
House Bill 4, Section 28

The 1983-84 School Year: Local school districts receive an increase in state funds for supportive services

The 1983-84 School Year amd Thereafter: Some local school districts under certain conditions specified in the Education Reform Act make adjustments in local salary supplements and in support from ad valorem taxation.

The 1984-85 School Year and Thereafter: Local school districts provide for a policy or policies of group insurance covering life, salary protection, and hospitalization.

For Details see Chapter 3, Part 3.4.7.

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Chapter 6

The Final Challenge

6. THE FINAL CHALLENGE

The Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982 is perhaps the most comprehensive reform in public education ever undertaken at one time by any state. The Act literally provides an opportunity for a new beginning.

It is a **commitment** not only for change but for performance, achievement, and accountability. It is a **commitment** of major proportions to educational progress in Mississippi.

To make the most of this opportunity for progress requires sustained commitment from our elected officials, the State Department of Education, and local educational and community leadership. Sufficient funds should be made available to properly implement the Act.

Money alone, however, is not sufficient. Implementation will require concerted, informed leadership and a great deal of commitment and hard work from elected officials, educators, and lay people all over our state. We have been given the opportunity to significantly improve the lives of Mississippians in this and future generations.

Do we have the vision, competence, and dedication necessary to implement the Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982?

Appendix

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The Phil Hardin Foundation And The Task Force For Educational Excellence in Mississippi

In 1964 Mr. Phil B. Hardin of Meridian, Mississippi, established an educational foundation. At the Foundation's organizational meeting, Mr. Hardin made the following statement:

> My material wealth has been principally acquired by the operation of my bakery business in the State of Mississippi and from the good people of that state. For a long time I have been considering how my estate could best be used after my death. I have finally conceived the idea of creating a charitable foundation through which the bulk of my estate can be used for furthering ... the education of Mississippians.

Upon his death in 1972 Mr. Hardin willed a portfolio of stocks and bonds, as well as the Bakeries, to the Phil Hardin Foundation. The directors of the Foundation use income from these sources to make grants intended to improve the education of Mississippians. Since the transfer of Mr. Hardin's estate to the Foundation in 1976, the Phil Hardin Foundation has distributed over 2.6 million dollars for this purpose.

The Foundation convened the Task Force for Educational Excellence in Mississippi and provided the funds and staff necessary for the Task Force's work. The Task Force was asked to develop a guide to the implementation of the Education Reform Act. That guide was to present in clear, concise language the requirements of the Act as well as to show how those requirements logically fit together to form a comprehensive strategy for educational improvement in Mississippi.

The Task Force first met May 4, 1983, in Jackson and subsequently undertook a detailed analysis of the Act during May and June of that year. A draft of the Task Force's report was reviewed by the members and special consultants at a meeting in Jackson July 19 and 20. After identifying needed revisions, the Task Force members and special consultants strongly endorsed the report and urged its wide distribution.

The directors of the Phil Hardin Foundation gratefully acknowledge the cooperation and support of Governor William F. Winter, State Superintendent of Education Charles E. Holladay, the Task Force members, and the special consultants to the Task Force.

Especial thanks is extended to Mrs. Laura Crumpler of the Phil Hardin Foundation and to Ms. Linda Eldridge and Ms. Ruby Lowe of the Mississippi State Department of Education for their patience and assistance in preparing this manuscript for publication.

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